the weekly Standard

NOVEMBER 14, 2005 • $3.95

MIDDLE EAST MACHTPOLITIK
REUEL MARC GERECHT

The Party of Sam's Club

Shouldn't the GOP consider doing something for its voters?

ROSS DOUTHAT & REIHAN SALAM

*****AUTO**5-DIGIT 94301
#UNZ0555B096 1#302604 WK P4
RON UNZ JUL 17 06
555 BRYANT ST 371
PALO ALTO CA 94301-1704

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The value of seeing the whole forest.

by the parent company of Kraft Foods, Philip Morris International and Philip Morris USA

As a company that is the parent of both tobacco and food companies, we know what it is like to make the news – and not only in the financial reports. But what may not always make news is the long-term performance of a company like Altria Group, Inc.

We're not only one of the 30 companies that make up the Dow Jones Industrial Average, we're also one of the most profitable companies in the world. And we've had 38 dividend increases in the last 36 years. The family of brands made by our operating companies includes household names like Maxwell House, Marlboro, Velveeta, Virginia Slims, Philadelphia, Kraft, Nabisco. And many more.

We also know that in order for our companies to continue to be in business they need to strive to meet the expectations of Altria's shareholders, their consumers, regulators and society. It is simply the only path to the future.

For a company as newsworthy as ours, at times it can be hard to see the forest for the trees. But to look beyond immediate challenges and position our company for long-term success, we have to keep the whole forest squarely in sight.

And that's a vision we feel is worth sharing.

Our name is Altria Group.

Altria

Kraft Foods
Philip Morris International
Philip Morris USA

NYSE: MO altria.com

© Altria Group, Inc. 2005

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Contents

November 14, 2005 • Volume 11, Number 9

2 Scrapbook..... *Joe Klein, Robert Conquest, and more.*

4 Casual ..... *Victorino Matus, gastronome.*

6 Correspondence.... *On Iraq, education, abortion, etc.*

11 Editorial ..... *Fight Back, Mr. President*

Articles

12 Behind Closed Doors *Democratic senators bluff; Republicans dither*..... BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

14 The Gergen Temptation *Will Bush fall for the advice of the Establishment?* ..... BY FRED BARNES

16 Paris When It Sizzles *The intifada comes to France*..... BY OLIVIER GUITTA

18 Tax Americana *The latest reform plans fall short of the Reagan vision.* ..... BY JOHN D. MUELLER

19 On the Sunni Side of the Street *The twilight of Arab nationalism*..... BY LEE SMITH

Cover: Thomas Fluharty

Features

21 The Party of Sam's Club

Isn't it time the Republicans did something for their voters? . . BY ROSS DOUTHAT & REIHAN SALAM

29 Bush's Great Middle East Gamble

The best hope for Iran is winning in Iraq..... BY REUEL MARC GERECHT

Books & Arts

37 What Zionism Is Not *The many ways the Jewish state is misunderstood*..... BY BENJAMIN BALINT

39 Mental Health *In the post-Freudian world, it's a matter of opinion*..... BY ALGIS VALIUNAS

42 Learning to Write *The Republic of Letters has a home at the Sewanee Writers' Conference*..... BY DAVID SKINNER

45 Washington's Audubons *A tantalizing glimpse at the National Gallery*..... BY CLAUDIA ANDERSON

47 Wayne Booth 1921-2005 *The man who knew how fiction works*..... BY EDWIN M. YODER JR.

48 Parody..... *Muammar Qaddafi, model democrat.*

William Kristol, *Editor* **Fred Barnes,** *Executive Editor*
Claudia Anderson, Richard Starr, *Managing Editors*
David Tell, *Opinion Editor* **Christopher Caldwell, Andrew Ferguson,** *Senior Editors*
Philip Terzian, *Books & Arts Editor* **Stephen F. Hayes, Matt Labash,** *Senior Writers* **Matthew Continetti,** *Staff Writer*
Victorino Matus, David Skinner, *Assistant Managing Editors* **Jonathan V. Last,** *Online Editor* **Daniel McKivergan,** *Online Foreign Editor*
Sonny Bunch, *Assistant Editor* **Duncan Currie,** *Reporter* **Michael Goldfarb, Joseph Lindsley,** *Editorial Assistants*
Lev Nisnevitch, *Art Director* **Philip Chalk,** *Production Director*
Paul Weisner, *Finance Director* **Catherine Lowe,** *Marketing Director* **Taybor Cook,** *Office Manager*
Carolyn Wimmer, *Executive Assistant* **Anastasia Uglova,** *Staff Assistant*
Gerard Baker, Max Boot, Joseph Bottum, Tucker Carlson, John J. DiIulio Jr., Noemie Emery, Joseph Epstein, David Frum, David Gelernter, Reuel Marc Gerecht, Brit Hume, Robert Kagan, Charles Krauthammer, Tod Lindberg, P. J. O'Rourke, John Podhoretz, Irwin M. Stelzer, *Contributing Editors*
Terry Eastland, *Publisher*

the weekly Standard

THE WEEKLY STANDARD (ISSN 1083-3013) is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in April, second week in July, fourth week in August, and the second week in November) by News America Incorporated, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96153, Washington, DC 20090-6153; changes of address to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Yearly subscriptions, $78.00. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-902-563-4723 for subscription inquiries. Visa/MasterCard payment accepted. Cover price, $3.95. Back issues, $3.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of THE WEEKLY STANDARD Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036. Copyright 2005, News America Incorporated. All rights reserved. No material in THE WEEKLY STANDARD may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. THE WEEKLY STANDARD is a trademark of News America Incorporated.

BPA INTERNATIONAL

www.weeklystandard.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

An Imaginary White House Attack

Time magazine columnist Joe Klein last week went after the Bush White House for what he alleged was its reflexive technique for dealing with unpleasant news: "destroy the messenger." Klein's evidence?

> A prominent Republican . . . told me that the White House had sent out talking points about how to attack Brent Scowcroft after Bush the Elder's National Security Adviser went public with his opposition to the war in the *New Yorker* magazine. "I was so disgusted that I deleted the damn e-mail before I read it," the Republican said. "But that's all this White House has now: the politics of personal destruction."

Take it from THE SCRAPBOOK, Joe: You need to find yourself a better class of prominent Republican, starting with one who reads his email and doesn't lie to you about its contents. We're assuming, of course, that your source even received the email, although he may simply have read a rumor of its existence on an especially hysterical anti-Bush blog, which claimed that "the White House revenge-team is out to get Brent Scowcroft."

Why does THE SCRAPBOOOK speak with such confidence about your source's unreliability? Because, notwithstanding our own lack of prominence, we received the email in question. Not only were we not disgusted, we actually read it, and it was about as ad hominem as a seminar paper.

The "attack" was headlined "Responding to Brent Scowcroft," and contained no talking points. Rather, it accurately summarized the *New Yorker* profile and "offered some thoughts in response" to Scowcroft's critique of Bush's foreign policy. The most pungent of which read as follows: "The charge that the way we have sought to bring democracy to Iraq is 'you invade, you threaten and pressure, you evangelize' is itself deeply misleading. Mr. Scowcroft's 'invasion' was in fact a liberation—and overthrowing one of the worst tyrannies in modern times and replacing it with free elections is a good start on the pathway to liberty."

If this is the "politics of personal destruction," Washington could use more of it. Not so Joe Klein's reporting. How to put this? Let's just say, We're so disgusted we're going to start deleting his damn stories before we read them. ♦

Congratulations

We note with satisfaction that Robert Conquest's name is among the winners of this year's Presidential Medal of Freedom. The Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civil award, has lost a certain amount of its luster over time, and this year's class is fairly typical: Recipients now routinely include retiring senior administration officials (Alan Greenspan, Gen. Richard Myers), popular professional athletes (Muhammad Ali, Jack Nicklaus, Frank Robinson), and aging-but-not-quite dormant figures from show business (Andy Griffith, Carol Burnett, Aretha Franklin). We're not entirely certain where Robert Conquest fits in this company, but his award surely restores the medal's distinction for this season.

Conquest, a British subject long resident in America, is not just a great historian, but a scholar whose original labors on the Soviet Union became part of the history of the 20th century. His seminal work *The Great Terror* (1968) was in its day the most searching, most fearless, most comprehensive, and most devastating account of the Stalinist purges of the 1930s that had ever been published. It still is.

Conquest was not the first to chronicle the horrors of the Soviet regime—and, of course, he was writing at a time when Stalin's heirs still ruled in the Kremlin—but until *The Great Terror*, neither the scope nor the magnitude of the devastation had been fully appreciated outside the Soviet empire. It goes without saying that *The Great Terror*, and his subsequent *Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*, were greeted with derision among most Kremlinologists, and among Western intellectuals generally, for their stern rebuke of Soviet apologists in Europe and America, and Conquest's insight that Stalin was no aberration but a logical consequence of Marxism-Leninism and the Bolshevik Revolution.

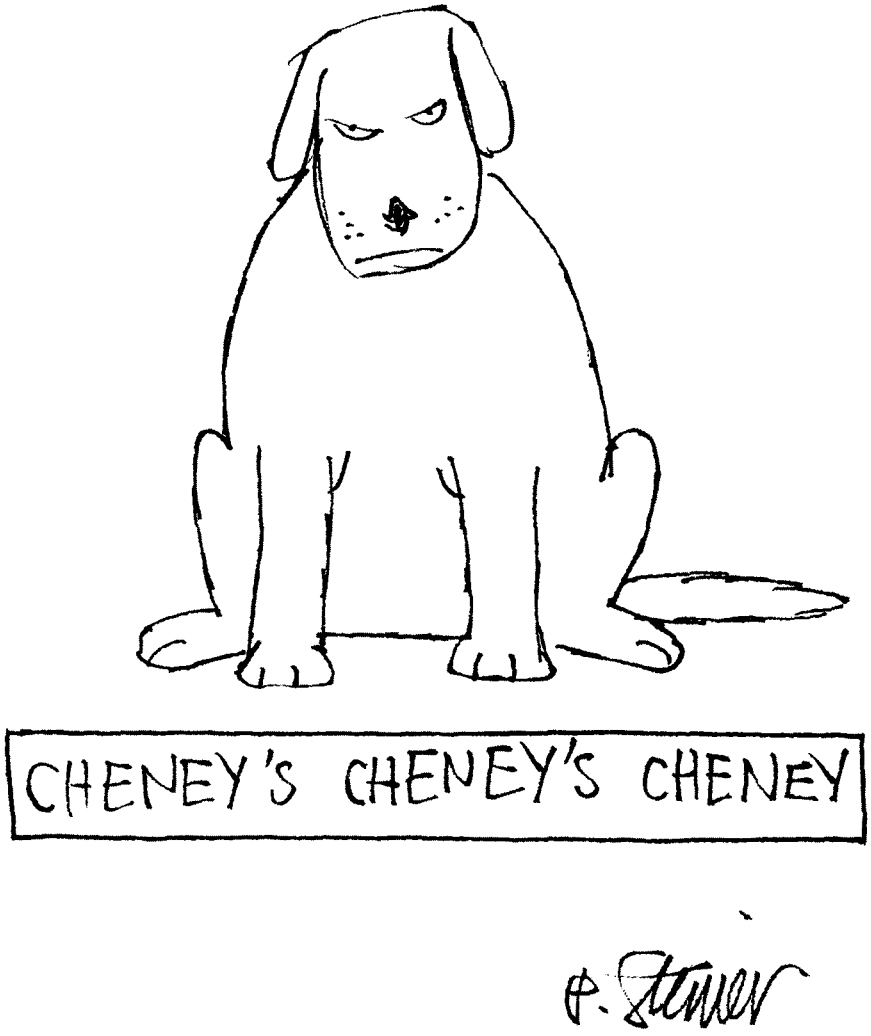
It is not every prophet who is honored in his adopted country, or lives to see his work so richly vindicated. The Medal of Freedom is not just a satisfying badge of achievement, but a measure of the debt we owe pioneers like Robert Conquest.

We should perhaps add a postscript: Despite the solemnity of his scholarly work and the award honoring it, Conquest is by no means a typically ponderous academic but a riotously funny versifier and wit. Asked by his publisher for a new title to a revised edition of *The Great Terror*, following the Soviet collapse, Conquest replied, "How about *I Told You So, You F— Fools*?" ♦

Galloway Update

THE SCRAPBOOK is not a habitual reader of the *East London Advertiser*, a paper based in the parliamentary district of England's most notorious Saddam-sympathiser, George Galloway. But we couldn't help noticing the *Advertiser*'s exclusive story last

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



week on its hometown MP.

"George Galloway's close friend and spokesman Ron McKay has admitted receiving almost $16,000 from the Jordanian businessman linked to the Iraqi oil-for-food scandal," it began. "Mr. McKay told the *Advertiser* he had now checked his bank statements and confirmed a $15,666 payment from Fawaz Zureikat was made into his personal account in August 2000."

McKay claimed "the cash was for legitimate business reasons, but he refused to give any more details." Though he admitted having had "many business dealings with Fawaz Zureikat over the years," McKay insisted the payment in question had "nothing to do with oil."

Far be it from THE SCRAPBOOK to question the probity of a Galloway pal like McKay. But we thought we'd mention this passage from the final report of Paul Volcker's independent U.N. commission, issued on October 27:

> Both Mr. Galloway and Mr. Zureikat have denied that Mr. Galloway was involved in obtaining the oil allocations or receiving any proceeds from the oil sales. Each of them has acknowledged, however, that Mr. Zureikat made large donations to the Mariam Appeal, a United Kingdom-based campaign for the lifting of sanctions against Iraq. Mr. Galloway was the founder of this organization. Mr. Galloway has denied he was aware of the source of Mr. Zureikat's donations. . . .
>
> [But] Ministry of Oil records show that . . . a total of 18 million barrels of oil were allocated to Mr. Galloway, either directly or indirectly through Mr. Zureikat, and nearly two-thirds of the oil was lifted. According to Iraqi officials, oil allocations were granted to fund Mr. Galloway's anti-sanctions activities. Iraqi officials identified Mr. Zureikat as acting on Mr. Galloway's behalf to conduct the oil transactions in Baghdad. . . .
>
> Iraqi officials have confirmed that Mr. Zureikat's allocations classified as "United Kingdom" were intended to benefit Mr. Galloway's anti-sanctions campaign, and those classified as "Jordan" were for the benefit of Mr. Zureikat personally.

A Senate panel led by Minnesota Republican Norm Coleman corroborated these findings. Both the Coleman and Volcker inquiries also have bank records to support their charges.

In a splendidly Clintonian defense, Zureikat told the Associated Press that he and Galloway "didn't break any Jordanian laws." No, of course not. They just violated international sanctions, did business with a genocidal dictator, stole money from Iraqis, and then lied about it. Other than that, they're clean. ♦

If You Believe This, We Have a Bridge for Sale

"'Karl does not have any real enemies in the White House,' . . . said a GOP strategist."

("Rove's Future Role Is Debated," *Washington Post*, Nov. 3)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Casual

Fat Chance

Years ago I was utterly despondent over the state of American cuisine. A diet frenzy gripped the nation. Supermarket aisles were chock-full of low-fat variants of all that was good and pure—namely, foods made with butter. But then the pendulum began to swing, thanks in part to the late Dr. Robert C. Atkins and his eponymous diet. Americans were again feasting on red meat, eggs, and other artery-hardeners. Even when restaurants added healthy dishes to their menus, as one fast-food rep explained to me, it was the least healthy items that sold the most.

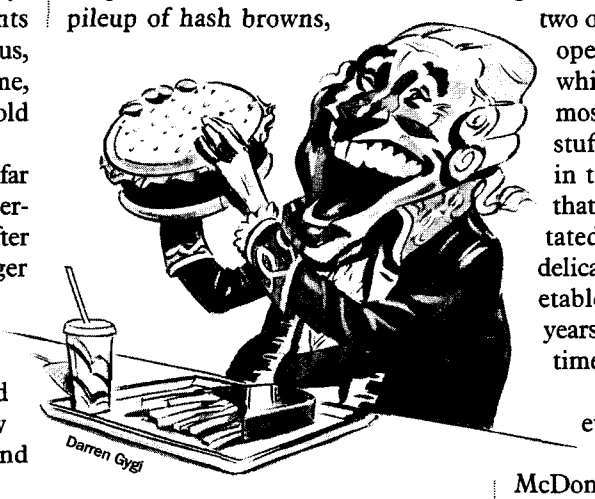
Does this mean we've swung too far in the opposite direction? Have Americans become gluttons? I ask this after a visit last week to the local Burger King. Hoping to satisfy my hunger for a hearty breakfast, I was drawn to the Enormous Omelet Sandwich: bacon, egg, cheese, and sausage on a sesame seed bun. How bad could it be? Seven hundred and forty calories bad, it turns out.

I asked the manager if the Enormous Omelet Sandwich was popular. "Oh yes," she said. "Surprisingly."

A visit to Burger King's website confirms this. Some 18 *million* Enormous Omelet Sandwiches have already been sold, though it's been on the menu for less than a year—making its addition one of the most successful product launches in the history of the company. The local manager pointed out, however, that even more popular was the so-called Meat'normous Omelet Sandwich, consisting of three slices of bacon, two slices of ham, one sausage patty, two eggs, and two slices of cheese. Says one BK executive, "We didn't hold anything back. It's like an all-you-can-eat breakfast buffet on a bun."

Burger King is, of course, not the only fast food chain selling sandwiches to widen your waistline. Wendy's Classic Triple Cheeseburger contains 970 calories. Hardee's sells a Monster Thickburger (two patties, cheese, and bacon) that clocks in at over 1,400 calories. Not to mention saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium.

When I found myself in Bettendorf, Iowa, a few years ago, I stopped in at Ross's Restaurant, home of the Magic Mountain: a massive pileup of hash browns, ground beef, fried eggs, and melted cheese served over toast in a bowl. Feeling bold, I ordered one of these mountains, and it was indeed magical, but not the highest peak. Braver souls are known to ascend what Ross's calls the Mega Mountain, essentially a double serving of the Magic Mountain.



No surprise, this trend towards gluttony is alarming health experts, who claim we are already facing an obesity epidemic. They say two out of three adults as well as 37 percent of children are obese. We eat too much and drink too much. Yes, drink, as in the 7-Eleven X-Treme Gulp "mug," which holds 1.5 liters.

Could we stand to exercise more and eat better? Absolutely. But are we really eating more than ever before? Not necessarily.

A.J. Liebling once wrote of the dining habits of his friend, the French playwright Yves Mirande, who, even into his seventies, "would dazzle his juniors . . . by dispatching a lunch of raw Bayonne ham and fresh figs, a hot sausage in crust, spindles of filleted pike in a rich rose *sauce Nantua*, a leg of lamb larded with anchovies, artichokes on a pedestal of foie gras, and four or five kinds of cheese, with a good bottle of Bordeaux and one of champagne." Mirande died in 1957 at the ripe old age of 82.

In *Gusto: Essential Writings in Nineteenth-Century Gastronomy*, we learn from Alexandre Dumas that for Louis XVIII, "chops were not merely grilled. They were grilled between two other chops. The diner himself opened this marvellous censer, which poured forth its juices and most delicate perfumes. Ortolans stuffed with truffles were cooked in the stomachs of partridges, so that His Majesty sometimes hesitated for moments between the delicate bird and the perfumed vegetable." Louis died in 1824 at 68 years of age—relatively old for his time.

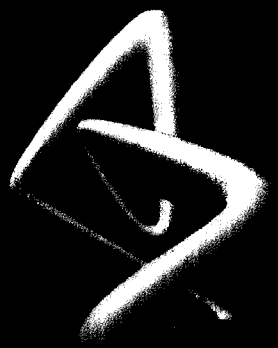
Today's restaurants are, however, wary of becoming infamous for their kingly servings. McDonald's will soon begin printing nutritional facts on its sandwich wrappers. But will a hungry consumer be deterred upon reading that the Big Mac in his hands contains some 560 calories? Or will he simply be encouraged, knowing this is fewer than half the calories of Hardee's Monster Thickburger?

There's no denying we Americans like to eat, but no more than, say, Monsieur Mirande or the king of France. One benchmark we can use to confirm we've achieved true gluttony is this headline from *The Onion*: "Denny's Introduces 'Just A Humongous Bucket Of Eggs And Meat.'" Of course it's a joke. No such item exists on Denny's menu. In fact, it probably won't be available until next year.

Victorino Matus

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What does this stand for?



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Correspondence

Debating Iraq's Future

Frederick W. Kagan makes a convincing diagnosis of the primary motivation behind the Sunni-Arab insurgency: It's not the fear of being ruled by Americans, who will sooner or later depart Iraq, but of being dominated by the majority Shiites ("Blueprint for Victory," Oct. 31). Not surprisingly, the Sunnis would like to wield disproportionate power over greater Iraq in a manner to which they had long been accustomed.

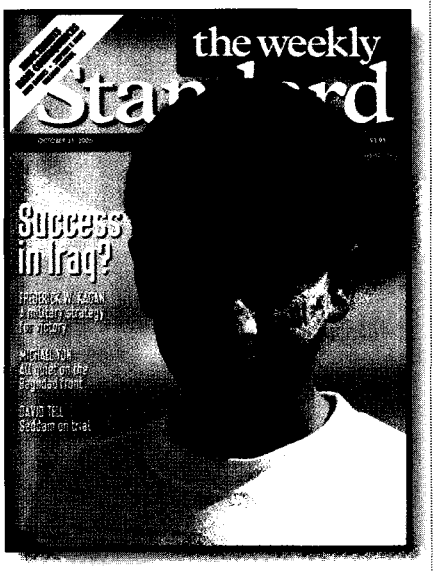
Given that diagnosis, I was less impressed with Kagan's positing that the "only political solution . . . is to compel the Sunni Arabs to accept a far lesser [than historical] voice in Iraq's affairs." Such "acceptance," he writes, would be achieved by causing them to know they are defeated via a thoroughgoing military occupation so as "to pacify the Sunni Triangle."

Although the best of all worlds would be a united Iraq, with its constituent ethnic groups living in peace, the process of achieving that end through military means will likely be prolonged and costly. It would seem that the shortest route to a viable peace would be to cut the Sunni Triangle loose from the other two ethnic regions, making it an independent state. This would give the Sunnis what they want the most—autonomy from the Shiites. And the Shiites would be handed the less onerous task of defending a national border rather than having perpetually to battle suicidal insurgents on their own turf.

Yes, before official "Balkanization" were to occur, we should probably "give peace a chance." Given the prospects of being expelled from the Iraqi Federation and accordingly denied the opportunity to share in the greater oil wealth of its neighbors, one would think that it would be the Sunnis and not the Shiites and Kurds who were overwhelmingly supportive of the provisional constitution. The former have everything to gain from national unity, and as it now stands, the latter two have the most to lose. They would not only have to share their wealth directly, but if current trends prevail, they would also have to bear the greater human and material burden of keeping peace within the Sunni territory. But if after six months or so the Sunnis have failed to demonstrate that they can behave suitably under the auspices of a federation, they should be put out on their own.

Balkanization, contrary to the stigma of its connotation, has worked reasonably well in the former Yugoslavia. The Croats, Slovenes, Bosnians, and Serbs generally behaved better once they had, or were largely confined to, their own countries. Our legitimate objectives in Iraq don't require national unity in order to be achieved.

George R. Compton
Layton, UT



Uni- or Multi-Versity?

James Piereson's wonderfully comprehensive discourse on higher education ("The Left University," Oct. 3) omitted the main reason universities have moved leftward in recent decades: the growth of moral relativism. After all, if each individual is the ultimate arbiter of right and wrong, then the well-educated thinkers in academe are entitled to think they are more right than anyone else. Freed from the constraints of "truth," they also deny rationality and contradict themselves at will. Moral relativism is wrong and cannot justify university leftism. But if we don't know how to disprove it, then we're stuck with university leftism.

Steven B. Cord
Columbia, MD

Abortion & Cancer

Sally Satel's "Political Science" (Oct. 31) contains an absurd criticism. She insists that "medical reality was indeed distorted" if the National Cancer Institute's website "was changed to say that women who undergo abortions have a meaningful chance of developing breast cancer." Didn't Dr. Satel learn in medical school that childbirth helps protect against breast cancer? Abortion prevents childbirth and thereby its protective effect; many studies show abortion also elevates the risk in other ways. The overall risk of breast cancer in the United States is 1 in 7.5, nearly twice or more than it is in countries that ban abortion, such as Ireland.

There is no denying that women who undergo abortions have a meaningful chance of developing breast cancer, and Dr. Satel's criticism of that disclosure is unjustified.

Andy Schlafly
Association of American Physicians & Surgeons
Far Hills, NJ

Sally Satel responds: I chose the phrase "meaningful chance" of breast cancer carefully. At the very most, abortion is only weakly linked to breast cancer—and, in epidemiological studies with small relative risks (as is typical of most breast cancer-abortion studies), a linkage by no means indicates cause and effect.

Researchers have long realized that women who have breast cancer will give a more complete account of their abortions than women who do not have breast cancer. Such "recall bias" can skew the accuracy of study results. A 2004 study in the *Lancet*, a British medical journal, analyzed data from 59 studies, including 83,000 women with breast cancer from 16 countries with liberal abortion laws. To control for recall bias, the *Lancet* study analyzed data collected on thousands of women (who did and did not have abortions) before they developed breast cancer. They found that "pregnancies that end as a spontaneous or induced abortion did not increase a woman's risk of developing breast cancer."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It Stands For Understanding

We're AstraZeneca, and we discover innovative medicines designed to make your life better. We approach every challenge with the same question: How do we enhance your health, your family's health and the health of your community? That forces us to face some of the most challenging issues in healthcare today.

Issues like mental health. Mental illness can profoundly disrupt a person's thinking, speech, memory, ability to work, to relate to others and capacity for coping with the demands of life. At AstraZeneca, we believe appropriately treating mental health isn't just about finding the right medicines, it's also about education. Educating physicians, policy makers and the public about mental disorders and finding better treatment solutions.

We don't have all the answers yet, but we understand that our role is not just to discover and provide medicines, but also to educate — to work together to enhance your health, your family's health and the health of your community. That's what AstraZeneca stands for. To learn more, log on to www.astrazeneca-us.com.

AstraZeneca

www.astrazeneca—us.com

©2005 AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals LP

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This study corroborated the findings of a vast study of 1.5 million Danish women. In that 1997 report in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, all Danish women born between 1935 and 1978 were linked with the National Registry of Induced Abortions and with the Danish Cancer Registry, thereby circumventing recall bias. No relationship between abortion and later breast cancer was found.

Finally, in February 2003, the U.S. National Cancer Institute gathered over 100 of the world's leading experts who study breast cancer risk. They found no linkage, nor did the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists that same year.

Sparring with Commies

In "Project for a New Chinese Century" (Oct. 10), Max Boot calls for using media to "crack open, not cement, the authority of the Communist party."

I would like to call attention to the boldest and most effective effort to date to "crack open" the authority of the Chinese Communist party: the *Epoch Times*'s publication of the "Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party" (available at *www.ninecommentaries.com*). The message of the "Nine Commentaries" is quite simple: The CCP is illegitimate, and its rule must end.

This series of editorials, which is also broadcast via radio, gives the Chinese people an uncensored history of the CCP that details its massive crimes; explains how it has ruled China through terror, lies, and the control of all information; and shows how it has set out to destroy all traditional forms of morality and belief. The "Nine Commentaries" is an appeal to the conscience of the Chinese people to shake off the rule of an evil tyranny.

The effect within China has been dramatic. Since early December, 5.2 million Chinese have renounced all association with the CCP and its affiliated organizations. Approximately 20,000 renounce the CCP every day. Naturally, the CCP has done everything within its power to prevent the spread of the "Nine Commentaries." For instance, just a few weeks ago, the *Epoch Times* published the story of police officer Han Xinlei of Xi'an City, Shanxi Province, who was murdered after having renounced the CCP. A recent study done at the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard Law School shows that websites referencing the "Nine Commentaries" are the most likely to be blocked by Internet filters in China.

Boot also suggests that "we need to champion Chinese dissidents, intellectuals, and political prisoners, and help make them as famous as Andrei Sakharov, Václav Havel, and Lech Walesa." We at the *Epoch Times* strongly agree and suggest that those of us outside China begin by calling attention to the millions inside China who have renounced the CCP. Their peaceful acts of extraordinary courage are helping bring a better future to China, and, as Boot makes clear, we all should be deeply grateful.

Stephen Gregory
Chairman, the Epoch Times
Chicago, IL

Metaphorical Assassins

I assume that The Weekly Standard will provide content meeting the highest standards of linguistic propriety; consequently, I was disappointed to meet an example of what I thought to be a lapse of such standards in Irwin M. Stelzer's "Blackpool Blues" (Oct. 17). Stelzer writes, "It was the Tory members of parliament who assassinated Margaret Thatcher when they deemed her usefulness to them to be at end." He then proceeds to say, "Since then, the assassins . . ." This is an unacceptable use of the term "assassinated." Rabin was assassinated. So were Kennedy and King. Thatcher was not.

Carl Zeno
Shrewsbury, VT

Fie! Foes Watch TV, Too

Fred Barnes's "A Failure to Communicate" (Oct. 17) was excellent as usual. I do believe, though, that many Americans fail to realize that when government officials speak to American media outlets, other audiences, including our enemies, are listening. For example, the administration would not want to discourage Iraqis by saying on national news networks how few Iraqi troops are ready and willing; instead, we want to encourage the Iraqis with the number of security forces that are battle-ready. The American audience may see "mixed messages" coming from the Bush administration, but we must come to understand that we are not the only ones listening.

Mike Irving
Boise, ID

• • •

The Weekly Standard
welcomes letters to the editor.
All letters should be addressed:
Correspondence Editor
The Weekly Standard
1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505
Washington, DC 20036.

You may also fax letters: (202) 293-4901
or email: editor@weeklystandard.com.

Advertising Sales

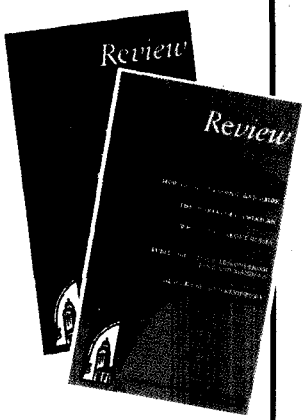
*For more information, visit **weeklystandard.com**, click on the **About Us** button at the top, and select **Advertise**.*

Peter Dunn, *Associate Publisher*
pdunn@weeklystandard.com; 202-496-3334
Nicholas H.B. Swezey, *Advertising & Marketing Manager; nswezey@weeklystandard.com; 202-496-3355*
Johan Schersten, *Foreign Country Reports*
johan@us-impact.com; 011-31-62-360-3690
Patrick F. Doyle, *West Coast Advertising Manager*
pdoyle@weeklystandard.com; 415-777-4383
Don Eugenio, *Midwest Advertising Manager*
deugenio@weeklystandard.com; 312-953-7236
Meghan Hawthorne, *Advertising & Marketing Assistant*
mhawthorne@weeklystandard.com; 202-496-3350

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cutting-Edge Commentary on Public Policy

POLICY REVIEW



SUBSCRIBE
Receive six bi-monthly issues for only $36 a year.

FREE ISSUE
Receive a complimentary issue of the latest Policy Review without obligation.

Call 877.558.3727 or visit www.policyreview.org

In the new issue of *Policy Review*

How Eminent Domain Ran Amok

Kelo *and the debate over economic development takings*

In some conservative and libertarian circles, the prevailing assessment of the motives underlying economic development takings is that they are purely matters of greed and legislative influence peddling. But such takings are too widespread, popping up in too many different locales, for those motivations to be the sole cause (though greed or corruption may play a role in many). These explanations also fail to take into account the genuinely decent intent that many communities may start with on the road to self-improvement. No, . . . a better description of motive here is the American lust for land.

—Carla T. Main

What to Do about Russia

Engage the government and aid the democrats

The most effective strategy for Bush's new foreign policy team to help slow Russia's democratic deterioration is not isolation, containment, or confrontation but rather deeper engagement with both the Russian government and Russian society. The United States does not have enough leverage over Russia to influence internal change through coercive means. Only a strategy of linkage is available. However paradoxical, a more substantive agenda at the state-to-state level would create more permissive conditions for greater Western engagement with Russian society. A new American policy toward Russia must pursue both—a more ambitious bilateral relationship in conjunction with a more long-term strategy for strengthening Russian civil, political, and economic societies, which ultimately will be the critical forces that push Russia back onto a democratizing path.

—James M. Goldgeier & Michael McFaul

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

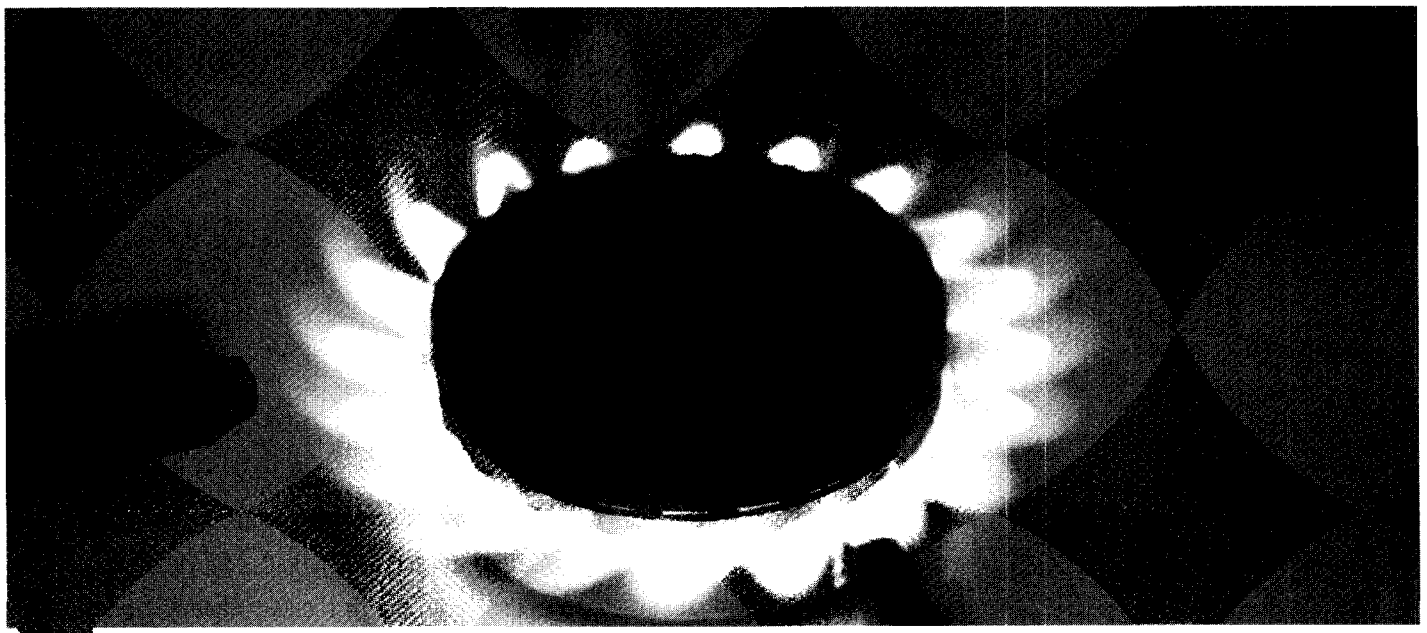
To read more, call 877.558.3727 for a free copy of the latest

HOOVER INSTITUTION

. . . ideas defining a free society

Hoover Institution Stanford University Stanford, CA 94305-6010 Tel: 877.466.8374 Fax: 650.723.1687 info@hoover.stanford.edu www.hoover.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Thoughts about natural gas

More than 60 million U.S. homes are heated with natural gas, and demand for this clean-burning fuel continues to grow rapidly.

Natural gas is needed to make products we use daily, including clothing, medicines, computers and plastics. It is used to generate electricity, to make fertilizer and to process our food. Natural gas is used to make light-weight but strong parts that help make cars and planes more fuel efficient. It's an essential energy source for manufacturing iron and steel, making paper products and fueling numerous other industries, big and small.

America's oil and natural gas industry is working around the clock to repair damage from recent hurricanes and to get all natural gas supplies flowing to ensure there is a reliable supply this winter.

You can help, too. Turn down thermostats, seal windows and doors, clean furnace filters and turn down the temperature on your hot water heater. Choose more efficient models when you replace older furnaces and hot water heaters. For more tips, visit www.api.org.

In addition to using energy wisely, America needs to increase access to domestic natural gas supplies to meet future needs.

Demand for natural gas has been strong and growing. But, domestic supply has not been keeping pace.

America has enough recoverable natural gas still underground to heat 125 million homes for 120 years.* However, much of it is out of reach, particularly on non-park lands in the West and under the waters off our coasts where access has been prohibited or severely restricted by the government. Advanced technology allows clean, safe development of our energy resources. Working together, government, industry and consumers can meet our energy challenges.

A Message From

America's Oil & Natural Gas Industry

To learn more, visit ***www.api.org***

*U.S. Department of Interior, U.S. Department of Energy & National Petroleum Council

© 2005 American Petroleum Institute

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the weekly Standard

Fight Back, Mr. President

Last week, I suggested that the Bush administration's second-term bear market had bottomed out. Since then, we've been pummeled by polls showing Bush in continued decline. Perhaps my bullish call on Bush was a bit early. Or perhaps it was wrong. Which is it?

That's up to the Bush administration. Over the next few months, the Bush team will put this bad year behind them, and regain their footing. Or it will be a long 39 months—a *very* long 39 months—for Bush and his supporters.

How to recover? Begin by facing reality.

The Miers episode did more damage than one might have expected. It raised doubts about Bush's judgment, on top of the Katrina-related doubts about White House competence, which have lingered. But Miers, and Katrina, are over. Now the task is to get Samuel Alito confirmed—using his confirmation process not just to get credit for a fine pick, but to make the case for judicial restraint and constitutionalism, and to lay the groundwork for additional winning battles on behalf of conservative appellate and (maybe) Supreme Court nominees.

The failed Social Security reform effort did real harm, too. The political capital expended, and the depressing effect of the wet-blanket-like message of imminent generational doom, undercut the credit Bush should have received for a strong economy. Now Social Security is over, and Bush can return the focus to economic growth. He can campaign on making the tax cuts permanent—and he can explore some of the broader, pro-family, pro-human-capital policy proposals suggested elsewhere in this issue by Ross Douthat and Reihan Salam, and by John D. Mueller.

And the administration paid a price for its virtual silence on Iraq during the spring and much of the summer. Now the administration seems to understand not just that they have to do everything they can to win in Iraq—but also that they must make, and remake, the case for the war. Do they also realize that they have to aggressively—not to say indignantly—confront the "Bush lied" charge now emanating from leaders in the Democratic party?

Last Tuesday, Harry Reid took to the floor of the Senate and asserted that the Bush administration had "manufactured and manipulated intelligence in order to sell the war in Iraq and attempted to destroy those who dared to challenge its actions." This is a serious charge; if it were true, it might well be an indictable offense. But it is, in reality, a slander. Shouldn't the president defend his honor?

After all, the bipartisan Silberman-Robb commission found no evidence of political manufacture and manipulation of intelligence. The administration's weak and disorganized attempts to respond to Joe Wilson's misrepresentations put the lie to the existence of any campaign to "destroy" opponents of the war. In fact, the administration has done amazingly little to confront, and discredit, attacks from antiwar Democrats. It was a shock last week when White House spokesman Scott McClellan emerged for a few moments from his defensive crouch to point out that Clinton administration officials and Senate Democrats also believed that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction. Will he, and others in the administration, return to this theme? Will they call the now antiwar Democrats on their disreputable rewriting of history?

Incidentally, are the Democrats ready to defend the proposition that we should have left Saddam in power? Is it okay with them if Zarqawi drives us out of Iraq? Will the administration challenge them as to what their alternative is? Will the administration take the time to put spokesmen forward, and recruit surrogates, to make the case for victory? Or do they enjoy being punching bags at the White House?

Bush has been in a similar position before. We forget how much trouble he seemed to be in early in 2004. Then Kerry was nominated, and the Bush team focused the country on the real choices before it. In the contrast, Bush did fine. Bush once again needs to fight for support for his policies and to draw a contrast between his policies and those of his opponents. If you do not defend yourself against your critics, your political standing is going to erode. Bush owes it to himself, to his supporters, to the soldiers fighting in Iraq, and to the country to fight back.

—*William Kristol*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Behind Closed Doors

Democratic senators bluff; Republicans dither.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

WHEN Senate minority leader Harry Reid abruptly took the Senate into closed session last Tuesday, he sought to portray the move as a desperate, last-ditch attempt to force intransigent Senate Republicans to complete the second phase of an investigation into the use of intelligence before the Iraq war. The procedural move is rare, one of the few things a minority party can do to seize the agenda—and the spotlight—from the Senate's majority.

After he called the Senate into closed session, a red-faced Reid sputtered his way through a press conference. "Finally after months and months and months of begging, cajoling, writing letters we're finally going to be able to have phase two of the investigation regarding how the intelligence was used to lead us into the intractable war in Iraq," he proclaimed, shortly before shouting down a reporter in mid-question.

He was just getting started.

> The only way that we've been able to get their attention is to spend three and a half hours in a closed session. We have spoken to all of the Republican leaders asking for this information, letters have been exchanged, conversations had, statements on major news programs, *Meet the Press*, all kinds of commitments being made, and they simply were not followed through.
>
> It's a slap in the face to the American people that this has been—this investigation has been stymied, stopped, obstructions thrown up every step of the way. That's the real slap in the face. That's the slap in the face. And today, the American people are going to see a little bit of light.

It was not a strong performance. As the session ended, Reid was asked about a statement from Pat Roberts, the Kansas Republican who chairs the Senate Intelligence Committee. Roberts had spoken of the work already completed by the Republican staff on the Intelligence Committee. Reid was dismissive. "They've done nothing, nothing substantive. And that's been the problem. Nothing substantive."

On that last point, as on several others, Reid was wrong. A week before Reid's tirade, Roberts had instructed the majority staff to "drop everything" in order to complete "Phase II" of the report. By May 2005, the majority staff had already completed much of its work—some of it with the assistance of the minority staff—in preparing a review of public statements about the intelligence. But that review never happened for a rather simple reason: politics.

On November 5, 2003, talk radio host Sean Hannity read on air from a memo prepared by the Democratic staff of the Senate Intelligence Committee. The memo described the desire of Democrats to reveal "the misleading, if not flagrantly dishonest, methods and motives of senior administration officials who made the case for unilateral and pre-emptive war."

To achieve this objective, the memo continued, Intelligence Committee Democrats should "prepare to launch an investigation when it becomes clear we have exhausted the opportunity to usefully collaborate with the majority [Republicans]. We can pull the trigger on an independent investigation of the administration's use of intelligence at any time—but we can only do so once . . . the best time would probably be next year"—that is, during the presidential election.

These plans were thwarted, in no small part by the public attention given this internal Democratic strategy memo.

In July 2004, the Senate Intelligence Committee released Phase I of its investigation into prewar intelligence on Iraq. Although the report was unanimous—it was signed by all members of the committee, Republican and Democrat—its 511 pages undermined the two main allegations of Bush administration critics: (1) that the Bush administration's case for war was at odds with the reporting policymakers were provided by the intelligence community; and (2) that the Bush administration pressured intelligence analysts to reach their deeply flawed conclusions.

But several Senate Democrats—led by Intelligence Committee members Carl Levin, Richard Durbin, and Vice Chairman Jay Rockefeller—were undeterred. Despite signing on to the findings of the exhaustive report, they pressed for a second report analyzing how the Bush administration had misused intelligence. In so doing, the Democrats trumpeted the presumed results of the investigation even as they pressed for its conclusion.

Their interest in using the forthcoming report as a political tool was laid bare when Senator Carl Levin released his own "study" of prewar claims on October 21, 2004—two weeks before the presidential election. Levin had grown increasingly frustrated that Phase II of the Senate report would not be completed in time for the election. So he decided to go public with his "findings." If the timing of the report's release suggests Levin's motivations were political, its contents remove any doubt. The 45-page study is riddled with inaccuracies. Quotations are taken out of context. Bush administration claims are misrepresented. Even names and dates are wrong.

Stephen F. Hayes is a senior writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In one section, the Levin report describes the testimony of former CIA director George Tenet. The testimony in question came on March 19, 2002, in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee. (The Levin report places it before the Senate Intelligence Committee in "February 2002," a minor but revealing error.) The Levin report quotes Tenet this way: "[I]t would be a mistake to dismiss the possibility of state sponsorship [of al Qaeda], whether Iranian or Iraqi and we'll see where the evidence takes us." Note the editorial insertion: "[of al Qaeda]." The intent is to demonstrate that Tenet stopped short of claiming that Iraq had been a state sponsor of al Qaeda, leaving the impression that this contrasted with statements made by the Bush administration.

Set aside the fact that Levin was disputing a claim the Bush administration never made—that Iraq was a "state sponsor" of al Qaeda, a relationship that would have implied Iraqi command and control of Osama bin Laden's Islamic Army. Tenet's actual words were quite different from those Levin's report put in his mouth. What Tenet refused to dismiss was Iraqi or Iranian state sponsorship of the attacks of September 11, 2001. Here is the quotation in context:

> LEVIN: And relative to Iraq, a couple other questions: Do we—do you have any evidence that Saddam Hussein or his agents played a role in the September 11th terrorist attacks or that he has links to al Qaeda?
>
> TENET: Well, as I note in my statement, there is no doubt that there have been contacts and linkages to the al Qaeda organization. As to where we are in September 11th, the jury's out. And as I said carefully in my statement, it would be a mistake to dismiss the possibility of state sponsorship, whether Iranian or Iraqi, and we'll see where the evidence takes us. But I want you to think about al Qaeda as a front company that mixes and matches its capabilities. The distinctions between Sunni and Shia that have traditionally divided terrorist groups are not distinctions you should make anymore, because there is a common interest against the United States and its allies in this region, and they will seek capability wherever they can get it.

Consider. Carl Levin's "report" misquotes Tenet, then mischaracterizes his comments to demonstrate that the Bush administration's claim of an Iraq-al Qaeda relationship was not supported by the judgments of intelligence professionals. Except in his response to Levin, Tenet was categorical. "There is no doubt that there have been contacts and linkages to the al Qaeda organization" with Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. Levin today speaks of the "nonexistent relationship" between Iraq and al Qaeda. Who is distorting intelligence?

After the election, Democrats continued to push for the completion of Phase II of the Intelligence Committee's report. They have done very little to disguise their motives, insisting at every turn that the Bush administration "fictionalized" its case for war.

But the Republicans on the committee, led by chairman Roberts from Kansas, wanted to broaden the inquiry to cover the public statements made by members of Congress, including, potentially, the same Senate Democrats pushing hardest for the Phase II inquiry. Democrats, for reasons that will soon be clear, protested. Their objections grew more vehement when Roberts described how he intended to conduct the inquiry.

Roberts and his Republican staff collected public statements—about 500 in total—made by Bush administration policymakers, members of Congress, and former Clinton administration officials. The Democratic staff came up with the list of Bush administration statements; the Republicans gathered the rest. All of the statements were entered on a spreadsheet that put each public statement side-by-side with the underlying intelligence reporting that came closest to supporting it. Senators on the committee were then invited to evaluate the public statements to determine whether they were supported by the intelligence provided to policymakers. But for Democrats eager to demonstrate administration distortions, there was one catch: The statements were to be evaluated without attribution. That is, the claims would be assessed without any knowledge of who made them. Although the plan seemed like a reasonable way to take politics out of the evaluation process, the Democrats balked. For good reason.

Consider the statements below. They are provided without attribution.

> 1. There has been some debate over how "imminent" a threat Iraq poses. I do believe that Iraq poses an imminent threat, but I also believe that after September 11, that question is increasingly outdated.
>
> 2. The fact that Zarqawi certainly is related to the death of the U.S. aid officer and that he is very close to bin Laden puts at rest, in fairly dramatic terms, that there is at least a substantial connection between Saddam and al Qaeda.
>
> 3. There is unmistakable evidence that Saddam Hussein is working aggressively to develop nuclear weapons and will likely have nuclear weapons within the next five years.
>
> 4. In the four years since the inspectors left, intelligence reports show that Saddam Hussein has worked to rebuild his chemical and biological weapons stock, his missile delivery capability, and his nuclear program. He has also given aid, comfort, and sanctuary to terrorists, including al Qaeda members, though there is apparently no evidence of his involvement in the terrible events of September 11, 2001.
>
> 5. I want to be real clear about the connection with terrorists. I've seen a lot of evidence on this. There are extensive contacts between Saddam Hussein's government and al Qaeda and other terrorist groups.
>
> 6. The terrorist threat against America is all too clear. Thousands of terrorist operatives around the world would pay anything to get their hands on Saddam's arsenal, and there is every reason to believe that Saddam would turn his weapons over to these terrorists. No

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one can doubt that if the terrorists of September 11 had had weapons of mass destruction, they would have used them.

7. The question is not whether we will disarm Saddam Hussein of his weapons of mass destruction but how.

All of these statements are those of Senate Democrats. The first three were made by Jay Rockefeller, vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee. The fourth, by Hillary Clinton. The fifth, by Joe Lieberman. The sixth, by John Edwards. The seventh, by Ted Kennedy. And the list could go on.

The Phase II report will likely be released by the end of November. In his own press conference last Tuesday, Senator Levin did the White House a favor by signaling that Democrats will focus on the Bush administration's claims about Iraq's support for terror, particularly the relationship between Iraq and al Qaeda. "There's a lot of evidence that the administration went way beyond the intelligence that was provided to them," said Levin. "We know that the intelligence was way off, it was false in many, many ways. But the administration went way beyond the intelligence, particularly as it relates to any relationship between Iraq and al Qaeda."

Levin hasn't always felt this way. "We were told by the intelligence community that there was a very strong link between al Qaeda and Iraq," he said on *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* on June 16, 2003. But that comment came at a time when Levin was still claiming that the Bush administration had pressured intelligence analysts to shape their assessments, something three authoritative reports have since debunked.

It is hard to imagine a more serious charge than the one Senate Democrats are now making: The Bush administration took the country to war in Iraq on the basis of lies. The White House seems to hope that by refusing to engage seriously in this debate, it can somehow make the issue go away.

It can't. ♦

The Gergen Temptation

Will Bush fall for the advice of the Establishment?

BY FRED BARNES

PRESIDENT BUSH didn't take the hint. Clean house, find fresh blood, replace senior White House staff—and this will assure success in the final three years of your presidency, Bush was told. When he didn't respond, those offering the president advice in public got specific. Get rid of Karl Rove, the key presidential adviser, and things will get better. Bush ignored that recommendation, too. Then Rove himself was addressed. Your peers in the White House are turning against you and debating whether you should be fired, the *Washington Post* informed him on the front page. Besides, you're not only hurting the president by staying, you're making it harder for the press secretary, Scott McClellan, to do his job. Rove, the symbol of Bush intransigence, stayed put.

There's a classic pattern here. It's Washington's way of taming a president, getting him to knuckle under. And it's always offered as if the Washington political establishment—a center-left conglomerate of officials of previous administrations, the permanent bureaucracy, lobbyists, consultants, old party hacks, and the media—had the president's best interests at heart.

The establishment is most influential when a president or other political leader is at a low point (as Bush surely is). In op-eds, news stories, speeches, and TV appearances, establishment figures outline a recovery plan. In Bush's case, it's this: Apologize publicly for your White House sins, especially the outing of CIA agent Valerie Plame; soften your policies, particularly in Iraq; start cooperating with Democrats; and fire Rove. Do this and good times will roll again.

For Bush's consumption, there's a Republican twist to the advice. Two establishment mouthpieces who served in Republican administrations, David Gergen and Ken Duberstein, have urged Bush to act like President Reagan after Iran-contra. Reagan rejuvenated his presidency and left Washington on a high note, they claim, and Bush can do the same.

The Reagan recovery they describe, however, is largely fictional. Yes, Reagan apologized for a guns-for-hostages deal with Iran. But he didn't believe a word of it. When I interviewed Reagan a few weeks later, he insisted there had been no guns-for-hostages arrangement. Duberstein boasted in the *New York Times* that Justice Anthony Kennedy was "confirmed overwhelmingly by a Democratic Senate" in 1987. He didn't mention what preceded it: the historic rejection of Robert Bork for that same Supreme Court seat. Bork, by the way, blames a feckless White House, stocked with fresh talent, for doing nothing to help his nomination.

Reagan's final years in office were ones of presidential weakness. He was humiliated by the Senate when it brushed aside his ardent appeals and overrode his veto of a highway bill. To give the president some innocuous talking points, the White House dreamed up something called the "economic bill of rights." It had

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

no connection with political reality. His success in foreign policy was cooked in the cake from his pre-scandal days.

What the Gergens and Dubersteins are offering Bush is the establishment option. And it has been enthusiastically endorsed by Democratic congressional leaders—and the more partisan the Democrat, the more enthusiastic they are. Naturally, firing Rove is a step Bush must take if he and Democrats are to "come together," Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid and his House counterpart Nancy Pelosi said in a letter addressed to the president but sent to the press.

The other possible course for Bush is the Rove option. That means Bush would retain his loyal staff, pursue a conservative agenda consistent with his campaign promises, and continue to thumb his nose at the Washington priesthood. Bush loathes Washington. He doesn't socialize with the establishment crowd or seek its advice. It's this strategy that irks Washington the most. In pursuing it, Bush accepts polarization as a fact of life and wins victories (legislative and electoral) not by heavily diluting his conservatism but by assembling narrow conservative majorities. This is the approach that gained Bush a second term.

You can tell which option Bush is likely to take from Rove's work schedule. He arrives daily at 7 A.M. He and Bush counselor Michael Gerson are working on next year's State of the Union address. Rove is the chief administration mediator with congressional Republicans on the touchy immigration issue. He's talking to public intellectuals, think tank scholars, and business leaders, and arranging for them to come to the White House for brainstorming sessions. Bush wants to unveil new proposals in 2006 since those he touted in his first campaign have been either enacted or defeated. Rove, I'm told, got teary-eyed when talking about how Bush and White House staffers have stood by him.

After an interlude of public silence as the grand jury investigating the CIA leak wound down, Rove has begun talking privately to the press again. Last week, he spoke to a Republican group in the Capitol. He cancelled several political speeches this fall, but he's scheduled to make a public appearance this week in Washington, addressing the Federalist Society.

There's a new reason Bush finds the establishment option unattractive. He tried a modified version of it this year and it didn't work. Call it the "purple detour"—you know, a mixture of red and blue. It didn't prompt a favorable reaction from Democrats, but it did alienate the president from his conservative base.

For much of 2005, Bush scarcely mentioned Iraq. He put off an attempt to make his tax cuts permanent and got no credit for that. Bush declared himself willing to raise Social Security taxes as part of a larger reform package. Democrats continued their lockstep opposition. He proposed a New Deal-like recovery program after Katrina, including new antipoverty efforts. Democratic attacks on his response to Katrina were unabated. He chose a Supreme Court nominee, Harriet Miers, in hopes of averting a major confirmation clash.

Did a single Democrat step forward to say now there's room for serious compromise with Bush? I can't think of one. Did anyone from the pantheon of Washington establishment figures commend the president publicly for moving in a new direction? Not that I recall. The takeaway from this experience is that polarization reigns and reasonable compromise is impossible. The alternative is to cave to the opposition and become a political eunuch. But why would any president want to do that? ♦

AND DID YOU KNOW? THERE'S A WEEKLY STANDARD EMAIL NEWSLETTER, TOO!

The Weekly Standard Newsletter,
edited by online editor Jonathan Last,
can appear in YOUR inbox
every Friday afternoon.
You'll get a preview of the upcoming issue
and commentary from our editors.

And the best part? **It's *FREE*.**
Go to *weeklystandard.com*
and sign up today!

the weekly Standard.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Paris When It Sizzles

The intifada comes to France.

BY OLIVIER GUITTA

THE FRENCH use the euphemism *"quartiers sensibles"*—sensitive neighborhoods—for the troubled, predominantly Arab and African working-class suburbs of Paris and other cities that increasingly resemble a ticking bomb at the heart of their society.

One such sensitive neighborhood is Clichy-sous-Bois, nine miles northeast of Paris, where last week's string of nightly riots began. Two Muslim youths—one black, one Arab—were electrocuted at a power relay station on October 27. The circumstances are sketchy: Were the youths being chased by the police because they were suspects in a break-in? Were they being chased for no reason? Or were they—as Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy claims, and the preliminary report of the prosecutor has now confirmed—never pursued by the police at all?

For the time being, what is certain is that the rumor that innocent youths had died as a result of police harassment spread like wildfire. Local residents called their friends in other neighborhoods and urged them to join the upcoming fight against the state. In fact, the first people attacked by the mob were the firemen who went to the power relay station to rescue the youths. The firemen, greeted by a barrage of stones, could not treat the victims on the spot but retreated to their trucks and drove the youths to a nearby trauma center.

Later, some 400 young men started trashing the town, burning cars, vandalizing a school, a mall, the post office, the fire station, bus shelters. They even tried to enter the town hall but were prevented by police. Fighting broke out when 300 antiriot forces entered Clichy and were met with Molotov cocktails and stones and even a live gunshot.

Seven cops were injured, and witnesses described the scene as "guerrilla warfare." Philosopher Jean-François Mattei spoke of "urban barbarity." In the eight nights of rioting that, at this writing, have ensued, in Clichy-sous-Bois and other Paris suburbs, about 1,224 cars were burned and numerous youths arrested. Three journalists from French TV had to abandon their car after they were threatened by the mob, which proceeded to torch the car along with an auto dealership, a preschool, and a gym. Another four gunshots were fired at cops and firemen, and two commuter trains were attacked.

One police-union leader, writing to Interior Minister Sarkozy, declared, "A civil war is unfolding in Clichy-sous-Bois. We cannot handle the challenge any longer. Only the Army, trained and equipped for this type of mission, can intervene to stabilize the situation."

Yet despite all the national and international headlines they occasioned, last week's disturbances were no freak occurrence. For at least 15 years, the immigrant and first-generation suburbs around France's large and medium-sized cities have been out of control. Crime rates have gone through the roof: According to the Renseignements Généraux, a division of the police, 70,000 violent crimes have been recorded in urban settings since the beginning of the year. They include the torching of more than 28,000 cars and 17,500 trash bins. According to the Interior Ministry, some 9,000 police cars have been stoned by youths this year.

And property is not the only target. On October 27, the day the two died in Clichy-sous-Bois, three young thugs in another Paris suburb savagely killed a 56-year-old Frenchman who was photographing a lamppost. Plenty of witnesses were around, but none came forward to testify. The attackers were trying either to steal the man's digital camera or to "protect their turf" from an intruder. Ten days earlier, in Vaulx-en-Velin, a suburb of France's second largest city, Lyon, the police chased two teenagers on a stolen scooter and one fell and hurt his ankle. The rumor spread that he was in a coma because of the cops. A few nights of rioting ensued, with violent faceoffs between teens and police on the exact spot where similar, serious rioting occurred 15 years ago.

At least as worrisome as such intermittent flare-ups is what happens every day in these ethnic neighborhoods. Most have become a no-man's land where police scarcely venture and the law of the jungle prevails. Honest, law-abiding inhabitants feel abandoned. As Bally Bagayoko, deputy mayor of Saint-Denis, a working-class suburb of Paris, put it: "People have totally lost confidence in the police. In most cases, they don't even file a complaint." Sometimes judges are physically threatened or attacked.

What's more, none of this is any secret. It's years since the first chilling firsthand accounts of what goes on in the worst ethnic slums were published. As early as 1984, President François Mitterrand made "sensitive neighborhoods policy" the fourth priority of his government. In 1990, after the first Vaulx-en-Velin riots, the newsmagazine *Le Point* trumpeted the headline: "These neighborhoods are scaring France." Politicians warned that the events were just a foretaste of the explosions to come. Eight years later, in a report ordered by the Interior Ministry, two sociologists wrote: "Cops working in the difficult neigh-

Olivier Guitta is a consultant on Middle Eastern and European affairs.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sipa / Eric Travers / Pascal Le Floch

A warehouse set ablaze in the Parisian suburb of Le Blanc-Mesnil

borhoods feel themselves to be, and are seen as, occupation forces in enemy territory."

A particularly fearsome firsthand account of life in a Muslim slum was a bestseller in 2002. Entitled *Dans l'enfer des tournantes* (*In Gang Rape Hell*), it recounts the life of a courageous French Muslim teenager, Samira Bellil, who was repeatedly gang-raped, and in order to survive became a "*racaille*" (hooligan), beating up other girls to get protection and respect. Teenage girls are the most frequent victims of violence, especially rape, which sometimes happens inside public schools. As one Tunisian mother testified recently, public schools turn out to be not a haven but one more nightmare for families. She lamented, "The Republic no longer protects its children." In fact, mothers sometimes enlist the toughest thugs to protect their daughters. The culture of violence is reinforced on every side, by the anti-police, anti-West gangsta rap kids listen to, and by the blogs where young thugs parade their exploits of arson or mugging at gunpoint, thereby becoming neighborhood "stars" and raising the stakes for other gangs.

An underground economy flourishes in the worst African and Muslim neighborhoods, with trafficking in drugs and stolen goods going on unimpeded and rival gangs fighting over loot. Communal tensions are equally pervasive, pitting white French (or "*Gaulois*") against Arab and Black, Black against Arab, and Muslim against Jew. In light of this, it is no coincidence that France saw a record number of anti-Semitic incidents in 2004 (970, well over 2 a day), most of them committed by young Muslims from the suburbs.

In extreme cases, these neighborhoods might as well be foreign countries, with their own laws and value systems. Thus, good students are treated as pariahs, while outlaws get respect. Matters have reached the point where some young "*Gauloises*" have testified that, in a kind of inverse assimilation process, they converted to Islam to escape harassment by Muslim thugs.

Some intellectuals speak of the Lebanonization of French society. Others speculate about civil war in ten years if nothing is done. Michel Gurfinkiel, editor of the news magazine *Valeurs Actuelles*, likens France today to the Weimar republic just before the rise of Nazism.

Interior Minister Sarkozy wants to turn a new leaf. He expresses determination to end the laissez-faire attitude toward the pathologies of the "*banlieues sensibles*" that has prevailed for decades, under governments of both left and right, with the possible exception of his own previous stint as interior minister, in 2002-04. Facing down rock throwers in Argenteuil, another hotspot, last week, he vowed to rid the suburbs of the "*racaille*."

Sarkozy has been widely criticized for using that term, even by members of his own party, who accuse him of adding fuel to the fire. Much hangs on the success of his Giuliani-like "zero tolerance" approach. As of now, he seems to be the only politician willing to tackle the thorny issues of immigration and security. Soon enough, French voters will have a chance to render their verdict on his policies: The current frontrunner in the presidential election of 2007 is none other than Sarkozy. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tax Americana

The latest reform plans fall short of the Reagan vision. BY JOHN D. MUELLER

THE FINAL REPORT of President Bush's Advisory Panel on Federal Tax Reform reveals a Republican party shell-shocked by the hostile reception to its Social Security reform plans and deeply ambivalent about the direction to take on tax policy. The underlying drama, rarely acknowledged, is whether the party should move away from Ronald Reagan's approach to these issues.

A broad-based, low-rate income tax was integral to Reagan's 1977 vision of a "New Republican Party . . . not limited to the country-club big-business image that, for reasons both fair and unfair, it is burdened with today." Reagan said then that he hoped to "attract more working men and women"—a goal served both by lowering rates, as in his 1981 tax cuts, and broadening the tax base, as in his 1986 loophole-eliminating reform.

But less than a decade later, the party was already moving back toward that "country-club big-business" image that Reagan so regretted. The 1995 National Commission on Economic Growth and Tax Reform, chaired by former Rep. Jack Kemp—who had convinced Reagan on the 1981 tax cuts and played a key role in the 1986 reform—and including now-Treasury Secretary John Snow, unanimously recommended shifting from a broad-based income tax to a flat tax effectively limited (over time) to labor income alone.

The current panel, chaired by Connie Mack, the former Republican senator from Florida, and John Breaux, the former Democratic senator from Louisiana, examined several approximations of the Kemp Commission's plan, but rejected these after concluding that they would violate President Bush's charge to come up with a system that raised about the same revenue as current law without greatly changing the distribution of the tax burden by income class. (A revenue-neutral 1995-style flat tax would have lowered the burden on those with incomes over $200,000 and raised it on those with incomes below that amount.)

Instead, the Mack-Breaux panel has recommended twin plans. The first would simplify the current income tax, which has acquired some 15,000 pages since the 1986 reform, without greatly changing tax rates. (Today's six brackets from 10 to 35 percent would be replaced with four brackets—15, 25, 28, and 33 percent.) The simplification would consolidate the plethora of existing personal credits and savings deductions and get rid of the Alternative Minimum Tax, enacted in 1969 to snag non-taxpaying millionaires, but expected to snag more than 50 million taxpayers in the next decade. These changes would be paid for by limiting deductions for mortgage interest, charitable deductions, and health insurance, and by eliminating the deduction for state and local taxes. On the business side, the plan would end the double taxation of corporate dividends and taxation of foreign income, simplify depreciation, and tax corporate profits at 31.5 percent.

The second proposal shares many of these features, but combines progressive tax rates on labor income (15, 25, 30), a flat rate of 15 percent on interest income, dividends, and capital gains, and a flat 30 percent rate on business cash flow (after investment in property, which is "expensed").

The initial response has been underwhelming, but in this respect, the Mack-Breaux panel resembles the Reagan 1986 reform, which was greeted with derisive laughter when the president proposed it in his 1984 State of the Union address and pronounced dead-on-arrival countless times before it finally passed. The 1995 panel's proposal, in contrast, was widely hailed at first for its simplicity, but self-destructed when Steve Forbes campaigned on it in the 1996 Republican presidential primaries and many middle-income voters discovered that any revenue-neutral version would raise their taxes.

Critically missing from the Mack-Breaux twin proposals are significant marginal tax-rate reductions, general acclaim for which in 1986 drowned out the bellows of all the gored political oxen. That reform cut the top rate (which had been 70 percent when Reagan took office) from 50 to a nominal 28 percent. As I have argued previously in these pages ("Taxes, Social Security, and the Politics of Reform," Nov. 29, 2004), there's only one easy, economically beneficial and popular way to achieve similar rate reductions today: Eliminate all remaining deductions favoring property over labor income, and tax both alike, allowing only a refundable credit based on family size (a "human maintenance" credit matching the deduction for property maintenance). When I proposed this to the Kemp Commission I calculated that the revenue-neutral tax rate under such a plan would be a flat 16 percent, but only an up-to-date Treasury estimate could confirm this.

There are two political obstacles. The first is general confusion, even among experts. On the day the Mack-Breaux panel's report was delivered, two of the panel's members, Edward P. Lazear and James M. Poterba, framed the basic choice this way in the *Wall Street Journal*: "Tax

John D. Mueller is director of the economics and ethics program at the Ethics and Public Policy Center. He served as an adviser to the 1995 National Commission on Economic Growth and Tax Reform.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

systems are income-based or consumption-based. Income taxes apply to labor earnings and capital income. Consumption taxes apply to spending, and they do not tax the return to saving or investment." Here is the confusion: The same analysis applies to people (so-called human capital) and to property (so-called nonhuman capital), yet the panelists would tax the investment spending or income of the first more heavily than the second, as if only property were capital and as if spending were synonymous with consumption. Even worse, because of a general failure to take seriously the issue of human capital formation, much spending on children that should properly be considered as an investment in human capital would be taxed as consumption.

The first obstacle, confusion, feeds and is fed by the second, factional ideology. As James Madison pointed out, faction is endemic to representative government, and faction depends on what we now call ideology. Ideologues are constantly vying to take over political parties, and their ideologies are fictions designed to serve the interest of a faction. Generally speaking, the Democratic party's constituents have depended disproportionately on labor income and the Republican party's disproportionately on property income. Democratic party ideology assumes that you can tax the bejeezus out of property income and yet somehow investment in property will take care of itself. The corresponding Republican ideology assumes that you can tax the bejeezus out of workers' income without reducing investment in people. I refer to this as the "Stork Theory," because it assumes that workers will just spring from out of the blue as if brought by a large stork. This theory is belied by plummeting birth rates in Europe and Japan, where labor income is heavily taxed.

The choice between taxing property and labor income equally or favoring one over the other cannot be finessed. As both Abraham Lincoln and Ronald Reagan knew in their bones, because both had switched parties themselves, the way to beat the other party is to attract, not destroy, its constituents. The recent GOP tax reform record is not inspiring, but despite the stumble on Social Security, President Bush still has three years to pick up Reagan's economic mantle. If not, it will remain on the ground waiting to be picked up by 2008 presidential candidates—from either party. ♦

On the Sunni Side of the Street

The twilight of Arab nationalism.

BY LEE SMITH

Beirut

IT'S THE LAST SUNSET of Ramadan here in West Beirut, and I'm sitting in a restaurant down by the sea among some of the city's Sunni notables, like the owner of Beirut's premier Sunni basketball team, and a former finance minister. As we watch for the sun to sink into the horizon so we can eat, the talk turns to Iraq's new constitution and what passage of the referendum means for the Sunni community there. At the very least, I suggest, the referendum is an official acknowledgment that the governance of Iraq is no longer the exclusive privilege of a minority.

My dinner companion, a successful Sunni businessman, says he is not so sure that Sunnis really are the minority in Iraq, given that the current numbers are estimates based on a 50-year-old census. Here in Lebanon there hasn't been an official count since 1932, though researchers across the political spectrum generally concur that the Shia are the largest sect in this tiny country of almost 4 million. "No," says my friend. "We are the majority."

Unfortunately, his vexed calculations are representative of a large current in the region, and the problem goes far beyond suspect arithmetic. As the sun sets on the Sunni Arabs' de facto Middle East empire, the sectarian fault lines that have been obscured by Arab nationalist politics are starting to widen, and everyone, Sunnis and non-Sunnis alike, is getting nervous. Iraq is merely the first tremor, and the Sunni-Shia divide there is only one of many. To name just a couple that have been in the news in the last month: In Egypt, Sunnis have turned on their Copt countrymen for a perceived slight to Islam, and in Syria the ruling Alawite sect may be girding itself for a fight to the death with that country's Sunni majority.

Many here believe that the Bush administration planned from the very beginning of the Iraq war to redraw the map of the Middle East in this way, a plate shift that would set Arabs at each others' throats and thus benefit Israel above all. While it's indeed true that many Israeli analysts have long understood the region to be a boiling cauldron of confessional, ethnic, and national rivalries, the U.S. inability to stem sectarian violence in Iraq suggests that the White House scarcely fathomed the depths of this divide, never mind intended to manipulate it. Conversely, if, as other critics of the Bush administration contend, the White House should have understood all of this in detail beforehand, it seems only fair to point out that even many in the region were taken in by decades of Arab nationalist rhetoric.

A few weeks ago, a friend in Cairo

Lee Smith is writing a book on Arab culture.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

related how his mother was watching one of the new Iraqi satellite stations and heard for the first time the story of the deaths of Hussein and Hassan, the grandsons of the prophet Muhammad. "She started sobbing," my friend said, "and when my sister the Islamist saw her crying, she told her to stop it, because it's a Shiite story and their deaths were good for the Sunnis."

With the threat of communal violence around every corner, even al Qaeda is apparently trying to rein in one of its own. In a letter from this past July that U.S. intelligence has attributed to al Qaeda's number two man, Ayman al-Zawahiri cautions Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, al Qaeda's man in Iraq, that "many of your Muslim admirers amongst the common folk are wondering about your attacks on the Shia." You and I may know that Shiites are heretics, Zawahiri confides, but many ordinary Muslims do not have a very clear idea about the doctrinal distinctions between Sunni and Shia and don't understand why you are killing those who appear to be your brothers. In short, me against my brother, but me and my brother against the outsider.

We are used to hearing about the struggle between extremists and moderates for the soul of Islam, and the role of modernity in Muslim societies —a battle in which we may have a stake but no real role to play. But what we're seeing in Iraq and elsewhere is also a very old political conflict—with theological foundations, to be sure—between Sunni Arabs and virtually all other comers. Islamism and Arab nationalism are only the latest renditions of a narrative that holds Sunni Arabs at the center of the universe. In a sense, then, Westerners may share some common ground with the Shiites, the Copts, and the Alawites, among other non-Sunni groups in the Middle East. Perhaps the 9/11 attacks came not because of what we do and who we are. Another possibility is that Americans were killed because of who we are not—Sunni Arabs.

Most of the early ideologues of Arab nationalism were Christian, which suggests that they saw Arab unity as an idea that might enable them to live peacefully, perhaps even as equals, with their Sunni neighbors, by creating a group premised on language, not religion or tribe. However, it was not long before Arab nationalism's essential features became obvious: What linked all the Arabs was the language of the Holy Koran, and the greatest hero of the Arab nation was the prophet of Islam. The region's minorities may have hoped Arab nationalism would disguise their differences with the majority population, but in the end they merely helped to manufacture another heroic Sunni narrative.

In effect, promoting democracy in the Middle East aims to replace that story with another one. If Arab nationalism aimed to obscure separate identities in order to exalt the group, democracy holds that all people are equal regardless of religion, sect, clan, race, or sex. Democracy means to enshrine the individual as society's most meaningful political unit—which is almost unimaginably radical in a region where group solidarity is a matter of life and death.

We probably shouldn't misinterpret the significance of Iraq's constitutional referendum, or pretend that the essential arithmetic of the Middle East has changed overnight. No doubt many in the Middle East are going to find it hard to sympathize with a Sunni community that believes God and history have ordained it to rule over all others. But we should remember that the Sunnis are, at least in Iraq, a minority, and they have very good reasons to be terrified. Everyone assumes Shiites and Kurds have reaped all the gains from the downfall of Saddam. But if democracy were to take root, it might end up also protecting the minority Sunnis, even as it turns their worldview on its head. ♦

INTRODUCING...

Worldwide Standard.com

The Weekly Standard Foreign Policy Posts

A new foreign policy blog available only at weeklystandard.com

A forceful John Bolton speech at the UN? An anti-U.S. harangue by Hugo Chavez? A change at the top at DOD? A Senate hearing on military strategy? The Worldwide Standard, edited by online foreign editor Daniel McKivergan, features posts on events and ideas of significance to American foreign policy. Bill Kristol and the rest of the *Weekly Standard* team will keep an eye on breaking news—and on media distortions. Visit early or late. We'll be keeping watch.

Bookmark The Worldwide Standard at www.weeklystandard.com/worldwidestandard and read the whole thing.

WorldwideStandard.com

Our jurisdiction is the world.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Party of Sam's Club

Isn't it time the Republicans did something for their voters?

By Ross Douthat & Reihan Salam

The presidency of George W. Bush has three years yet to run, but this season of scandal and disillusionment is an opportune moment for conservatives to start thinking seriously about the post-Bush era—and particularly how to fashion a domestic policy from the wreckage of Bush-style, big-government conservatism. Thanks to the abiding weakness of the Democratic party, Republicans haven't yet paid a political price for insider-friendly appropriation bills, Medicare boondoggles, or the smog of semi-corruption rising from the party's cozy relationship with K Street. But even if the GOP's majority survives the next election cycle, conservatives shouldn't kid themselves: President Bush's domestic policy looks less and less like a visionary twist on traditional conservatism, and more and more like an evolutionary dead end.

Forget the misplaced loyalty and incompetence on display in Hurricanes Katrina and Harriet. The intellectual exhaustion of the current majority should have been obvious at the close of the last legislative term. After months of political reversals—including the defeat, without a shot fired, of Social Security reform—the congressional leadership managed three victories: a pork-laden $286 billion in new transportation spending, an energy bill larded with generous corporate subsidies, and a noble but unpopular free trade act, CAFTA, that may prove a poison pill for vulnerable GOP congressmen come 2006. All in all, not a bad week—unless, that is, you believe in small government, expanding economic opportunity, and the long-term political viability of the Republican party.

How did things reach this pass? One difficulty, as a host of delighted Democrats have pointed out, is that a party ideologically committed to a small government may be ill-equipped to run a large one. Many honest small government conservatives aren't interested in overseeing programs that they would prefer to see slashed or abolished, so their place has been filled by an assortment of cynical operators, for whom the only guiding principle is to keep Republicans (and themselves) fat, happy, and securely in power.

But a larger problem is that even the more idealistic aspects of the GOP program—Bush's vision of an "ownership society," the pursuit of a politically risky Social Security privatization plan—have been ill-suited to the present political climate, and to the mood of the American people. It's not just that the American people have shown little appetite of late for dramatically shrinking the scope of the federal government, or taking more economic responsibility into their own hands—it's that there's shrinking support for such goals among reliable Republican *voters*.

In May, the Pew Research Center released the 2005 edition of its Political Typology, a survey that slices the American electorate into nine discrete groups. Unsurprisingly, the core of the GOP's support turns out to be drawn from "Enterprisers," affluent, optimistic, and staunchly conservative on economic and social issues alike. But the so-called Enterprisers represent just 11 percent of registered voters—and apart from them, the most reliable GOP voters are Social Conservatives (13 percent of registered voters) and Pro-Government Conservatives (10 percent of voters). Both groups are predominantly female (Enterprisers are overwhelmingly male); both are critical of big business; and both advocate more government involvement to alleviate the economic risks faced by a growing number of families. They tend to be hostile to expanding free trade, Social Security reform, and guest-worker proposals—which is to say the Bush second term agenda.

This is the Republican party of today—an increasingly working-class party, dependent for its power on super-majorities of the white working class vote, and a party whose constituents are surprisingly comfortable with bad-but-popular liberal ideas like raising the minimum wage, expanding clumsy environmental regulations, or hiking taxes on the wealthy to fund a health care entitlement. To

Ross Douthat is an associate editor at the Atlantic Monthly *and Reihan Salam is a writer in New York.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

borrow a phrase from Minnesota governor Tim Pawlenty, Republicans are now "the party of Sam's Club, not just the country club."

Therein lies a great political danger for Republicans, because on domestic policy, the party isn't just out of touch with the country as a whole, it's out of touch *with its own base.* And its majority is hardly unassailable: Despite facing a lackluster Democratic presidential candidate who embodied virtually all the qualities Americans loathe—elitism, aloofness, Europhilia, vacillating weakness—George W. Bush, war president and skilled campaigner, was very nearly defeated in his bid for reelection. GOP operatives boast that their electoral efforts were targeted down to the minutest detail, and that their marketing prowess delivered victory for the incumbent. The trouble is that even such extraordinary efforts delivered only a narrow victory.

Since the election, the GOP's position has steadily worsened. Even before this fall's disasters, the party was slipping in the polls. The hope that compassionate conservatism might help Republicans make permanent inroads among blacks and Hispanics has evaporated—Katrina's racially charged aftermath probably delivered the *coup de grâce* to Bush's efforts to woo African Americans—and now the party is struggling to hold on to its white working class loyalists. Last summer, Bush's approval rating among non-Hispanic whites stood at 61 percent. Over the past year, it's plummeted to 44 percent. And that number understates the party's woes. According to a Pew Research Center survey released in mid-October, 64 percent of non-Hispanic whites want the next president to pursue policies very different from those pursued by President Bush.

Then there are female voters—many of them the indispensable "social" and "pro-government" (think "war on terror") conservatives, without whom the current GOP majority wouldn't exist. Between 2000 and 2004, Bush wooed them successfully: His margin of victory among white working class women climbed from 7 percent to 18 percent; among married white working class women, it rose from 15 percent to 31 percent. But Bush's electoral success with this group has not translated into lasting gains for the GOP; white working class women now favor congressional Democrats by wide margins. The "achievements" of the Republican Congress—massive highway spending that goes straight to well-connected contractors and an energy bill that does nothing to address gasoline prices at the pump—are unlikely to bring them back.

Given this political landscape, Republicans face three obvious options. The first is to continue to muddle along with the domestic policy that produced the multi-trillion-dollar Medicaid drug benefit, three years of bloated appropriations bills, and the failed push for private retirement accounts, and hope that social issues and national security concerns are enough to keep the party's majority afloat. A second option is to attempt a return to a purer, more fiscally austere faith, even if it means ceding political power, and wait for the looming entitlement crisis to convince Americans of the wisdom of repealing the New Deal.

The third possibility—and the best, both for the party and the country as a whole—would be to take the "big-government conservatism" vision that George W. Bush and Karl Rove have hinted at but failed to develop, and give it coherence and sustainability. This wouldn't mean an abandonment of small-government objectives, but it would mean recognizing that these objectives—individual initiative, social mobility, economic freedom—seem to be slipping away from many less-well-off Americans, and that serving the interests of these voters means talking about economic insecurity as well as about self-reliance. It would mean recognizing that you can't have an "ownership society" in a nation where too many Americans owe far more than they own. It would mean matching the culture war rhetoric of family values with an economic policy that places the two-parent family—the institution best capable of providing cultural stability and economic security—at the heart of the GOP agenda.

The proposals that follow are neither perfect nor exhaustive, but they offer a starting place for a discussion that the Republican party desperately needs to have. The economic anxieties of middle and working-class voters are likely to be *the* domestic political issue of the coming years, and a party, or at the very least a 2008 presidential candidate, in search of an agenda needs to start thinking seriously about how to address them.

The Future of the Family

A "pro-family" economic agenda would begin with the recognition of a frequent left-wing talking point—that over the past few decades, returns to capital have escalated while returns to labor have declined, and that the result has been increasing economic insecurity for members of the working and middle classes. One can exaggerate the impact of globalization on American workers, and it remains clear that it's largely positive. Nevertheless, many of the benefits of global trade derive from firing unproductive workers in one's own country (or inducing them to work harder for less pay) and replacing them with more efficient workers elsewhere. The negative impact is real, and it affects the population in a very uneven way, with those at the bottom squeezed hardest.

For those on the left, the discussion about rising economic security often ends here, with a narrative that vindicates their beliefs about free markets—that winners are few, and that the poor inevitably lose out. (Thomas

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"What's the Matter with Kansas?" Frank is only the latest class-war Cassandra to make his name on this kind of analysis.) Working-class insecurity, however, has roots not only in the rise of the globalized economy, but also in the decline of the family.

This decline, tellingly, is a working-class phenomenon for the most part. For women aged 25 to 34 in the best-educated third of the population, the rate of single parenthood has barely budged since the 1960s—it was 5 percent then, it's 5 percent now. But for those in the least-educated third, the illegitimacy rate has nearly tripled, rising from 7 percent in the 1960s to 20 percent today. This decline in husband-wife families, the Brookings economist Gary Burtless recently argued, accounts for 21 percent of the increase in economic inequality between 1979 and 1996 (the increase in assortative mating—high-earners marrying other high-earners, low-earners marrying other low-earners—accounts for another 13 percent). Inevitably, the brunt of these negative trends is borne by children: Had family structure remained unchanged from 1970 to 1998, Adam Thomas and Isabel Sawhill recently argued, the child poverty rate would have been 13.9 percent, rather than 18.3 percent. That sounds like a small difference, but over decades it represents millions of lives unscarred by poverty, and millions of children more likely to become productive, law-abiding citizens.

Conservatives have long emphasized the importance of these cultural factors, and rightly so—but just as culture impacts economics, so too can economic policy affect cultural trends. It's possible to imagine policies that would support a virtuous cycle, in which increased working class economic security shores up familial stability. And policies that offer government support to economically insecure families wouldn't be money for nothing. America, like any nation, depends on parents' willingness to raise healthy and well-educated children.

Without a youthful population, the costs of supporting retirees are unsustainable, and the innovation and entrepreneurial zeal that make America the world's economic leader will slowly wither. Yet the decision to raise children continues to be treated as something akin to the decision to buy an expensive automobile—a perfectly fine thing to do, but don't expect any sympathy or support when you can't afford a tune-up or an oil change. Having a large family used to be a sign that you had faith in the future. Today, outside the family-friendly exurbs that played a crucial role in reelecting President Bush, it's become a form of conspicuous consumption—or, for the poor, a mark of irresponsibility.

Crafting pro-family policies that stand against this trend is not a question of turning back the clock to some lost Ozzie-and-Harriet golden age, as critics of social conservatism often assert. Quite the opposite: Precisely because the world has changed, with the demise of lifetime employment and increasing returns to education, strong families are growing ever more important, and policies that encourage people to form them and keep them together are ever more necessary.

Yet despite the fact that families with children are among the most reliable Republican constituencies, President Bush has done surprisingly little to address their needs. As part of the 2001 tax cut, the size of the child tax credit increased from $600 to $1,000; that's a start, but it doesn't go nearly far enough. The next GOP tax cut ought to be targeted explicitly to married couples with children—or, alternatively, a creative Republican politician might champion a generous baby bonus, a pro-natalist child benefit designed to help defray the costs of children and to encourage larger families.

Quebec's Allowance for Newborn Children (ANC), implemented with considerable success in the late 1980s, might serve as a model: The program provided (approximately) $500 for a first child, $1,000 for a second, and, for a third and all subsequent children, 20 quarterly payments of $400. According to one estimate, from Kevin Milligan of the University of British Columbia, this led to a 15 percent bump in the province's birthrate, and the overall "cost" to the government of each additional child—i.e., each child who would not have been born in the absence of the ANC—was just over $15,000. That number sounds high, but it pales in comparison with the financial sacrifices that the parents will make to raise the child—the opportunity costs, in forgone wages, can top $1 million for a family of modest means—and the value of the taxes that child will pay over a lifetime.

But it's not enough to give a boost to parents when they have a child; Republicans need to make it easier to raise these bonus babies as well. Inevitably, this means doing more to ease the burdens of working mothers. To address the concerns of women, Democrats tend to focus on child care subsidies, parental leave, and other measures that are better understood as "market-friendly" than as "family-friendly," in that the goal is to make it as easy as possible for parents to maximize their time in the paid labor force. There's a good reason for this. Women's educational attainment has risen rapidly, surpassing that of younger men, and workplace success has followed. There is no returning to an economy, or a society, in which most women don't work outside of the home.

The trouble is that the contemporary workplace demands that women follow the male career track, which assumes a seamless transition from school to full-time employment, and a career path that begins in the early twenties and continues in unbroken ascent until retire-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment. For many women, this is an appealing model—but many more find themselves losing their best childbearing years to the workplace, and then scrambling to squeeze in a child or two before middle-age arrives.

A better way to approach the division between work and family life might be what sociologist Neil Gilbert calls a "life-course perspective," with measures that would allow a mother (or father, for that matter) to provide child care full-time for several years before entering, or reentering, the workforce. For instance, the government could offer subsidies to those who provide child care in the home, and pension credits that reflect the economic value of years spent in household labor. Or again, Republicans might consider offering tuition credits for years spent rearing children, which could be exchanged for post-graduate or vocational education. These would be modeled on veterans' benefits—and that would be entirely appropriate. Both military service and parenthood are crucial to the country's long-term survival. It's about time we recognize that fact.

Such a recognition, not incidentally, would be a recipe for continued GOP political dominance. Married couples are already the most reliable Republican voters. Policies making it easier to get married, stay married, and have more children would cement these voters' loyalties, and they would also draw wavering, culturally-conservative-but-economically-anxious voters into the Republican fold. The party of James Dobson isn't going to win back wealthy social liberals any time soon. But a pro-family economic agenda might make inroads among, say, upwardly mobile minorities, or working-class whites in increasingly up-for-grabs states like Minnesota and Iowa.

But if the Republican party really wants to shore up its majority for a generation to come, it needs to go further. A bold, pro-family GOP ought to steal a page from the Democrats' playbook and make a push for reform in what may be the greatest source of anxiety for families: the country's health care system.

Health Care First

At this point, it's obvious to all but the most delusional that President Bush's Social Security gambit has failed. Having grasped the third rail with his bare hands, Bush deserves our admiration. But he seriously misjudged the public mood. Coming alongside the slow extinction of traditional employer-provided pension plans and the demise of union-supported guaranteed employment, Bush's proposed reforms appealed almost exclusively to people who already have stock portfolios and 401(k) plans—the voters, that is, who already feel most secure about their economic prospects. Everyone else was skeptical—and some of the stiffest resistance came from loyal Republicans.

None of this is to say that Social Security reform should be abandoned—but it shouldn't be the top priority of a party concerned with the interests of working families. In this regard, President Bush repeated an error made by Bill Clinton. In the mid-1990s (as Mickey Kaus especially has argued), Clinton ought to have pushed welfare reform before turning to health care reform. By doing so, Clinton would have demonstrated his commitment to breaking with big-government liberalism, thus gaining political capital for changing the health care system. Instead, Clinton offered a nightmarishly complex "HillaryCare" proposal that convinced many voters that he was a liberal Democrat of the old school.

Similarly, by aggressively pursuing benefit cuts and voluntary personal accounts, Bush only reinforced the view that conservatives are bent on reducing economic security. What Bush missed was an opportunity to demonstrate that conservative solutions can actually *increase* economic security—an opportunity that could have been seized if the GOP had made a serious effort to extend health insurance to all Americans.

By now, the fact that over 45 million Americans are uninsured is familiar, as is the conservative rejoinder that many of these millions are uninsured by choice. But the 45 million figure is a snapshot—the number who are uninsured at a particular moment in time. The number who are uninsured *at some point* during a typical year—usually because they lose coverage while switching jobs—ranges from 57 million to 69 million. Over a period of 24 months, that number climbs to over 80 million. This means that at some point every two years, millions of American parents dread seeing their child catch a bad flu for fear of facing long lines at an understaffed, overworked emergency room. Even if this transitional period lasts only a few months, it's a period fraught with anxiety. Nor are health care anxieties confined to voters who lack insurance. Most current plans serve as prepayments for routine medical expenditures. When the unforeseen comes along, millions of families find themselves financially vulnerable.

It's no surprise, then, that Americans consistently rank health care as among the most pressing issues—far ahead of Social Security, and eclipsed only by the threat of terrorism and the war in Iraq. Nevertheless, the Bush administration has failed to offer any comprehensive proposals on this front. The prescription drug benefit was an ostentatious and hugely expensive sop to the elderly, and seems to have left Republicans with a positive aversion to useful reform. Democrats, chastened by

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

their previous failures, have been slow to seize the opportunity, but that's unlikely to last. If conservatives aren't careful, anxieties over health care could yet provide an opening for liberals to impose a system more rigid and stultifying even than HillaryCare.

To forestall such a disaster, Republicans need to deliver a market-friendly health care reform, and simplify the current hodgepodge of command-and-control and laissez-faire. Instead of approaching health care reform as the left does, as a problem for the uninsured—a matter of charity for those less fortunate—conservatives should cast the health care crisis as what it really is: a problem for the *insured*, for people whose insurance plans will lapse if they lose or shift jobs, whose plans don't cover expensive crises, and who must pay extra, in the form of higher premiums, to cover the medical bills of the permanently uninsured.

And instead of uncritically accepting the liberal insistence that reforming health care would require the government to spend vastly more money, conservatives should realize that the health care system has become so complex and inefficient that a real reform could be crafted that would eventually pay for itself. In 2003, federal, state, and local governments poured out almost $730 billion on health care, and the tax breaks handed out for employer-provided health care came to almost $190 billion. With this level of spending, it ought to be possible to move to a more rational, market-oriented health care system that would provide portable coverage for all families, without spending an extra cent of government money.

For instance, Mitt Romney has proposed in Massachusetts that health insurance be made universal by making it *mandatory*. Allowing individuals to forgo coverage encourages the young and healthy to live dangerously, giving them a free ride on the public purse when things go awry, and making health care more expensive for everyone else. If you expect government to step in when the going gets tough, you have an obligation to make a contribution.

But if purchasing health insurance is to be mandatory, it needs to be cheaper. To drive down prices, and free up money to subsidize insurance for the poorest Americans, anticompetitive practices in the health care sector would have to be attacked. As professors Michael Porter and Elizabeth Teisberg have argued, the health care industry is designed to reduce costs borne by intermediaries—hospitals, health plans, physician groups—rather than increase value for patients. So there is a relentless drive to shift costs onto individuals, and to minimize competition through network restrictions that prevent consumers from finding the best care. Medical providers collude to suppress information about the quality of care, a practice that would be considered intolerable in any other industry. By negotiating for steep discounts from provider groups, large employers and the government make the individual insurance market intolerably expensive for most Americans. Eliminating these bottlenecks will, over time, go a long way towards reducing costs, while increasing consumer choice.

Driving down costs will also enable Republicans to sever health care coverage from employment. As GM's continuing woes suggest, American industry is being hobbled by health care costs. In 2004, employers spent $443 billion on health care, and even small and mid-sized corporations are forced to maintain miniature welfare states, with all of the administrative costs and hassles that entails. It's hardly surprising that the Chamber of Commerce is joining liberal groups in seeking some kind of solution, and there's every reason to believe that corporate America will stand behind a smart reform. More important, severing health care coverage from employment will eliminate the gaps in coverage that occur when workers move from one job to the next. Workers will no longer be shackled to jobs they despise, thus offering a tremendous boon to productivity.

Finally, the goal of any health care system ought to be security against catastrophic expenditures. Individuals can choose to pay for comprehensive coverage, but the responsibility of government should extend only to making sure that all Americans purchase a high deductible policy—rather than subsidizing gold-plated plans for upper-income Americans, which the current system often does.

All these reforms would have salutary effects on family life. If your coverage were portable, you'd feel more secure in moving your family to a community with a lower cost of living, or where you're more likely to find remunerative employment. At the same time, making health care more universal and affordable would reduce the costs of child rearing, encouraging family formation and offering a sense of security to parents debating whether to have a second (or third, or fourth) child.

And by passing a reform along these lines, the Republican party would gain the credibility it needs to modernize Social Security, and to reinvent that program so that it works to further conservative goals, rather than undercut them. At present, we have the worst of both worlds: an expensive and inefficient health care system that discourages child rearing and economic risk-taking, and an increasingly expensive pension system that does the same. The latter is popular, but the former isn't—and that should be a clue for conservative reformers.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Beyond Welfare Reform

The last great conservative reform came almost a decade ago, when a Republican Congress delivered exactly what it promised—reduced welfare rolls and increased employment rates. It's curious that Republicans have since shied away from pursuing further reforms aimed at low-income Americans. There's certainly room for them: Despite its success in reducing illegitimacy rates and putting welfare recipients to work, welfare reform has done little to reverse the collapse in marriage rates among the working poor, or arrest the growth of child poverty. And while conservatives have fought hard to eliminate perverse incentives that discourage marriage, a far more serious problem looms—the dire shortage of marriageable men in poor communities. Exhorting single mothers to find husbands, and prospective husbands to enter the workforce, can only do so much good when less-educated men continue to see their wages stagnate or decline—and when so many end up incarcerated.

Republicans have long celebrated entrepreneurship and the idea of self-help. But among the very poor, the obstacles to self-help remain formidable. President Bush recognized this in calling for a more "compassionate conservatism." But the language of compassion strikes the wrong note: It speaks to middle-class empathy, not to the aspirations of poor Americans with the drive to succeed. Republicans need to recast their policies for the poor as a self-help agenda, with less emphasis on warm sentiments and more on offering tools for advancement. The earned-income tax credit is one policy that's worked brilliantly. By rewarding poor mothers and fathers who work for a living, it has made a serious dent in child poverty. But the EITC does little for childless workers struggling to make ends meet, particularly the less-educated single men who are at the root of the poverty problem.

One tool that Republicans might consider promoting is a program of wage subsidies, like that proposed by Columbia University economist Edmund Phelps, which would help less-educated single men make ends meet, thereby making them more desirable marriage partners. Given the right boost, poor young men could become working-class fathers. There's no question that a serious wage subsidy would be expensive—Phelps figures up to $85 billion a year—but the cost would be reduced if it lowered incarceration rates and reduced outlays of other government benefits. Far from being a new entitlement, wage subsidies would be an anti-entitlement, with government helping only those who are already helping themselves. Indeed, such a subsidy could be accompanied by further cuts in benefits to those who are fit to work and don't—thus increasing the incentives for holding down a job and raising a family, and leaving shirkers at the mercy of family and friends, or private charity.

The contrast with the Democrats, again, would be instructive. While the left bashes Wal-Mart, which creates more jobs and more savings for non-college-educated workers than a million pressure groups, wage subsidies would recognize that low-wage employers aren't the enemy when it comes to fighting poverty. By working with these employers—instead of imposing higher wages by fiat, as a minimum-wage increase would do—conservatives can deliver results where liberals have failed. Low-income strivers, on their way to the middle class, will take notice—and so will centrist voters alienated by the corporation-bashing of Howard Dean's Democratic party.

Then there is the elephant in the room—immigration. No other issue separates the Republican base so starkly from the Republican elite, and with good reason. Simply put, large-scale immigration from Mexico has made the rich richer and the poor poorer. The college-educated have reaped the benefits of a steep decrease in the price of labor-intensive services, while working-class Americans, exposed to increasingly stiff competition, have seen their earnings stagnate and even dwindle.

But Mexico is more than a source of cheap labor. It's the ancestral homeland of a large and growing number of Americans. Remembering the lessons of Pete Wilson's doomed anti-immigration crusade, many Republicans, from President Bush on down, are reluctant to travel that road again. Such considerations drive the Bush administration's proposed immigration reform, which would offer a path of earned legalization to those already in the country. Bush is half-right: Few Americans would support a program of mass expulsion (which would probably destroy the Republican party's electoral prospects for a generation), and there needs to be a greater effort to Americanize Hispanics (as we used to say). But taken on its own, Bush's quasi-amnesty would in all likelihood *increase* the size of the unskilled influx, further damaging the economic prospects of low-income native-born workers, and raising the likelihood of a revolt by the Republican base.

To forestall this possibility, the GOP needs to find a way to split the difference between the anti-immigration hawks and the advocates of open borders—by predicating any earned legalization program on increased spending for border control and serious sanctions for employers who hire undocumented workers. Would such mea-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sures put an end to illegal immigration? Of course not. But they would do something to slow it, and more important, seal a fissure that's opening within the party.

In the long run, though, the GOP needs to recognize that clumsy pandering on immigration isn't the best way to win Hispanic voters (especially since many of the workers being hurt by unfettered immigration are themselves native-born Latinos). If Republicans are going to continue making inroads among Hispanics, they need to address their economic aspirations, not their ethnic loyalties. It's upwardly mobile second- and third-generation Mexican-Americans, not recent immigrants, who are likely to turn to the GOP—and wage subsidies for low-income workers, a health care reform that drives down costs, and government support for large families are all more likely to win them over than any amnesty proposal.

Rethinking Taxes

Finally, taxes. For 30 years, the heart of Republican political success has been tax cuts. By embracing steep rate reductions, President Reagan made a decisive break with decades of defeatist fiscal orthodoxy. Instead of depressing squabbles over how to slice a shrinking pie, the GOP offered the vision of a thriving entrepreneurial economy. But like aging hippies who never quite got over Woodstock, many of those young Reaganites, now safely ensconced in the GOP establishment, view across-the-board tax cuts as a permanent ticket to political power. And here, too, the party risks losing touch with its base.

Right before the Reagan tax cuts, a median-income four-person family paid about 12 percent of their total income in taxes—and reducing that burden, predictably enough, yielded a political windfall for Republicans. But over the intervening years, the burden borne by these voters has sharply decreased, and today a median family of four enjoys an income tax burden lower than at any time since 1957. Inevitably, political support for tax cuts has declined, as middle and working class voters weigh the costs and benefits of government spending and increasingly find that they're coming out ahead. Slashing tax rates to the bone has limited appeal for these voters, and a GOP that talks in that language—rather than the more appealing language of tax reform and simplification—will be hard-pressed to maintain its current majority.

To his credit, President Bush seemed to recognize this when he announced that a revenue-neutral tax reform, rather than further across-the-board cuts, would be a major second-term priority. But such reform has taken a back seat to the ill-fated Social Security gambit—and the proposals offered by President Bush's tax-overhaul panel, while sensible, have been disappointingly timid.

What would a sweeping pro-family tax reform look like? For one thing, it would keep taxes lowest for those entering the workforce and preparing to have children, and for young families making investments in their offspring. As workers gain experience and enter their peak earning years, it makes sense for the tax burden to increase. A payroll tax offset for children—another form of the "baby bonus" we recommended earlier—would be one way to achieve this effect. But another, still bolder choice would be to remove all families earning less than $100,000 from the tax rolls. For those who want to see a daring tax reform that leaves an impression in voters' minds and pocketbooks, this would be an avenue worth exploring.

Recall that the income tax was originally designed as a single-rate tax on a relatively small number of high earners. We still have something like it today, in the form of the alternative minimum tax (AMT), which was designed to ensure that the affluent pay at least some income tax. Bush's tax commission has called for the abolition of the AMT, which isn't indexed to inflation and will start biting into middle-class paychecks within the decade. But perhaps the GOP should consider an alternative: Why not reform the AMT and abolish the regular income tax instead?

Michael J. Graetz of Yale Law School, hardly a wild-eyed utopian, has called this the "back to the future" plan. Graetz would raise the AMT exemption to $50,000 for single-earners and $100,000 for joint returns, and impose a single rate of 25 percent on all earnings over those thresholds. To replace the lost revenue, he would also—and this is the controversial part—introduce a consumption tax of 14 percent.

The benefits of such a proposal would be considerable. It would reward people for saving and investing early in life. It would hit the idle rich—affluent retirees drawing down their savings, trust fund babies buying penthouse apartments—hardest, while the productive rich, and their income from investments and business ventures, would emerge considerably less scathed. And best of all, the consumption tax would be relatively easy to collect, and the $100,000 cutoff would eliminate 100 million of the 130 million income-tax returns filed every year.

But for a pro-family Republican party, this proposal would only be a starting point. For example, Graetz would preserve a wide array of tax deductions—for state and local taxes, charitable contributions, home mortgages, and employer-provided health care. Republicans

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

could pick and choose from this list, targeting deductions to key constituencies. We have already argued that the deduction for employer-provided health care should be eliminated. The home mortgage deduction could be limited to low-income couples and families with children—after all, it hardly makes sense for the government to be subsidizing the McMansions of childless dual-income families. Taking a page from President Bush's tax-overhaul panel, state and local tax exemptions could easily be axed—and the subsequent revenue enhancement used to finance measures to help child-rearing families when they need it most (with deductions for college, health care, etc).

Admittedly, there would be losers from such a reform. Affluent, childless couples and middle-aged singles would undoubtedly face stiffer rates, as would the wealthy residents of high-tax states. But faced with the real cost of bloated budgets, well-off *rentiers* in Blue States might think twice before voting for tax-and-spend Democrats. Meanwhile, the majority of Americans would benefit greatly—including middle- and working-class voters, who would have the Republican party to thank for lower, simpler taxes.

More important, such a reform would disproportionately benefit the most productive Americans: bold upper-class entrepreneurs, thrifty middle-class investors, the upwardly mobile poor. And above all, it would benefit parents with large families—the people making the most significant investment possible in the American future (and doing the most to solve the looming Social Security shortfall).

All of this raises the question, Why change course? Republicans have been gaining ground politically for a generation, and this autumn of conservative discontent might be just a bump in the road, not a permanent setback. Every one of the proposals listed above will alienate at least some influential conservatives, and potentially undermine the unity of purpose that has been the movement's greatest strength. While Democrats, political losers for a generation, have every reason to retool and rebrand, calling for a reinvention of the Republican party will strike many as fixing something that isn't broken.

But the path of least resistance invites its own set of perils. The greatest danger facing any political majority is ideological sclerosis—the belief that because the party has attained political power on the strength of certain policies, those policies will always and forever keep them in power. With sclerosis, come stasis and corruption; with stasis and corruption, eventually, comes defeat.

The current Republican majority isn't likely to be defeated, or disappear, in the next few election cycles—though serious setbacks are always possible. But the party feels increasingly tired and corrupted by power, obsessed with fighting yesterday's battles and unwilling to adapt to the changing political landscape—a landscape that has changed, in many cases, precisely *because* of the party's past successes. Because of the GOP, most Americans no longer feel overtaxed; because of the GOP, rising crime rates no longer threaten the fabric of daily life; because of the GOP, the free market no longer buckles under the weight of government regulation. But in these very successes lie the seeds of potential defeat.

Many of the issues that the Republican party rode to power remain salient today, of course. The GOP doesn't need to rethink its support for a strong national defense, for instance, or its commitment to social conservatism. But having risen to power at a time when most Americans were worried about losing their economic *freedom*, the party needs to adapt to a new reality—namely, that today, Americans are increasingly worried about their economic *security*—and reorient its agenda to address those concerns.

The proposals outlined above are hardly the only set of domestic policies that the Republican party could advance. But they are the *kind* of ideas that the GOP needs to explore as it moves into its second decade as America's majority party. They combine the traditional Republican faith in individual initiative and the genius of capitalism with a willingness to cultivate the habits and institutions that enable individualism and capitalism to thrive. They aim to fulfill the vision, expressed in Ronald Reagan's first Inaugural Address, of a government that would "stand by our side, not ride on our back . . . provide opportunity, not smother it; foster productivity, not stifle it." And they recognize what a group of forward-thinking British Tories have called the "And" theory of conservatism—that many of our political choices are really false choices, and that core conservative principles can go hand-in-hand with imaginative solutions to the nation's problems.

So today's Republican party should be in favor of helping recent immigrants get ahead *and* slowing the flow of illegal labor—in favor of providing a helping hand to the hard working poor *and* cutting subsidies to the idle and shiftless—in favor of a tax policy that favors the working class *and* the productive rich. Above all, it should be in favor of limited government, *and* in favor of using government's considerable power to shore up the institution that makes a limited government possible—the beleaguered but resilient American family.

Critics will carp that such a party would be trying to be too many things to too many people. But there's a term for a party that attempts this feat and succeeds: a majority party. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bush's Great Middle East Gamble

The best hope for Iran is winning in Iraq

By Reuel Marc Gerecht

Since 9/11, President Bush and this most convulsive region of the Muslim world have become Siamese twins, inseparably connected in Iraq. If the Iraqi experiment takes—and we will certainly know whether a new democratic Iraq is alive and kicking by the end of the Bush presidency—then President Bush will likely rank with Ronald Reagan, the last president American liberals and "realists" truly disliked, as one of the boldest and most far-sighted American leaders. The hoo-ha over the CIA official Valerie Plame will not likely have the magnitude of the Iran-contra scandal, which, whatever its improprieties, barely dented the historic achievement of Reagan against the Soviet Empire. If Iraq collapses, however, then President Bush will be disparaged more savagely by both Democrats and Republicans than was LBJ, the grand architect of America's failure in Vietnam. It's reasonable to guess that a majority of Americans now would not give the Bush administration a passing grade in the Middle East. If a private straw vote were taken among neoconservatives, they, too, might fail this presidency, given Bush's toleration of incompetence at the Pentagon, the State Department, and the Central Intelligence Agency in Iraq and elsewhere.

Is such severity warranted? No. It is, however, a close call. On none of the major Middle Eastern issues that define this administration—the war in Iraq, thwarting clerical Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons, the struggle against Middle Eastern autocracy and Islamic extremism, and the democratization of the Greater Middle East—is the administration doing brilliantly. Concerning clerical Iran, a member of the now-never-mentioned "axis of evil," President Bush is doing almost as poorly as President Clinton did against North Korea (the embarrassing image and words of Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Pyongyang are very hard to top). And the administration's ongoing display of weakness toward the clerical regime may well have ugly ramifications in Iraq, where fear of American strength is an extremely important factor in dissuading the Islamic Republic from trying to sabotage the growth of democracy. Though the administration is doing a much better job of articulating a sound understanding of Islamic extremism and defining the "war on terror" as a fight against Islamic radicalism, it has not developed a plan for encouraging and prodding Middle Eastern autocracies to open up their political systems. When a senior White House official described the administration's democratization program as "stalled," he was being charitable. Nonetheless, add up all the negatives and positives, and the administration is still ahead. A survey of the region and issues ought to reveal that the Bush administration, though of diminishing internal strength and international vigor, is likely to leave the Middle East and the United States in far better shape than we were before the invasion of Iraq.

Iraq. As we learn more about the cultural background of the Iraqi insurgency, it is becoming apparent that a mutation has occurred inside Iraq's Sunni community. Former Baathists have become Sunni supremacists-cum-Islamic militants. This is, given contemporary Muslim history, a wholly natural evolution. Think about Algeria, Egypt, and Syria, which all once had highly charged authoritarian and secular ideologies and once were particularly nasty police states. As the regimes grew more clannish and corrupt and the ideologies rotted, Islamic identity and religious expression expanded, gathered strength, and increasingly tilted toward violence. Since Saddam's secular totalitarianism was the most severe in the Middle East, its withering and collapse naturally engendered strong religious expression in its wake. This has happened among both Sunni and Shiite Arabs; the same has probably happened among the Kurds, too, though the Kurdish leadership insists on showing Westerners only the secular-loving nature of the Kurdish people.

Reuel Marc Gerecht is a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The war has in all likelihood greatly accelerated this evolution. What took 25 years in Algeria, Egypt, and Syria has taken around a decade in Iraq. Bad cultural analysis of Iraq's Sunni Arab minority, which probably comprises no more, and perhaps a lot less, than 20 percent of the country's population, was again egregiously on display before the October 15 referendum when President Bush made a telephone call to Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim, the leader of the largest Shiite party, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq. This may have been a watershed moment for the United States—the high-water mark of what I would call the Sunni Stockholm Syndrome (the more the Arab Sunnis engage in violence, the more we try to placate their side). The president wanted al-Hakim to get the United Iraqi Alliance, the dominant coalition within the Iraqi parliament, to delete from the proposed constitution the provision for "Shiite" federalism. This provision gives the Shiites in the southern provinces of Iraq the possibility of creating an autonomous zone similar to the Kurdish region in the north. The president's advisers had obviously told him that the Sunni antipathy for the constitution might diminish if the Shiites deleted the section about southern federalism, which the Sunnis saw as a prelude to a national fracturing that might leave them controlling very little oil (most known oil reserves are located in the north and south).

It was a foregone conclusion that al-Hakim would say "no" to the president. First, neither al-Hakim nor the Supreme Council had the power within Iraq's Shiite community to say "yes" even if they'd wanted to, and they obviously didn't. Two years ago, al-Hakim, the rest of the Supreme Council, and most of the traditional Shiite clergy led by Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani would have been appalled by the idea of Shiite federalism. Stomaching Kurdish federalism was hard for them. The Shiites, and the clerics in particular, considered themselves, not the Arab Sunnis, the true repository of Iraqi national sentiment, the historic defenders of national pride (the Sunnis, after all, gained power through British intervention, while the Shia fought unsuccessfully against the infidel invader).

There are several reasons why the Shia have changed their minds about federalism in the intervening two years: Envy of the Kurds, the spread of Basra's independent streak to the larger Shiite community in the south, oil greed, and the need for some of Iraq's more radical Shiites to try to build a home where the reach and power of the traditional clergy based in the holy city of Najaf has historically never been strong. But among the most important reasons is a growing fear that the Iraqi Arab Sunni community may have, just possibly, lost its collective mind. The insurgency, in particular the Sunni jihadist suicide-bombers who have unceasingly slaughtered Shiite civilians, have unquestionably taken a toll on Sunni-Shiite relations. The Shia now want to have some defensive depth, an autonomous area that they can wall off if all hell breaks loose in the country (and this definitely hasn't happened yet, despite the regular commentary in certain quarters about a civil war in Iraq).

President Bush's telephone call to al-Hakim was the last in a long line of U.S. actions that to most Shiite eyes probably seemed foolishly indulgent of a Sunni community that has so far shown very little desire to be absorbed into a democratic society. The Sunni Arab community has not just been at war with a foreign invader and its occupation (the Sunnis, after all, stomached the British after World War I who made it possible for them to gain power). *As a community*, the Sunnis have been opposed to the idea of a new political system that would deny them, at minimum, equal power with the Shia and the Kurds. At best, the Sunni Arab community has wanted to allot power on the basis of confessional identities, as the Lebanese constitution does.

The Sunni Arab community has in its DNA a love of centralized power, since only through centralized authority can it once again aspire to dominate the country. Go ahead and try to find statements from the Sunni Association of Muslim Scholars (*Hayat al-Ulama al-Muslimin*)—probably the organization that best represents the sentiments of the widest swath of the Arab Sunni population in Iraq—supporting the idea of democracy. At best, I've found commentary denouncing the grotesque slaughter of the Shia, particularly in mosques. This is certainly a sign of progress, since the Sunni Arab leadership in Iraq did not respond quickly or with much umbrage to the jihadist and insurgent shift in tactics, from gunning primarily for Americans to preying on the Shia deemed traitorous (that's all Shia, in the eyes of the jihadists; in the eyes of the insurgents, all Shia who work with the Americans or for the elected government).

It's a good bet that the Sunni clergy will in the end make their peace with the new Shiite-led order. With very rare exceptions, Sunni clerics have not been nihilists. There is no love lost between them and the Shiite ulama, and one still waits to see Sunni clerics reciprocate the outreach efforts of the Shiite ulama towards them. Yet slowly a Shiite Iraqi military presence is building up in the Sunni triangle. The original American effort to build up an Iraqi army and security services with a sizable Sunni component, especially in the officer corps, appears to be over. It's difficult to say there was ever actually an American plan to do this since American military officers directly involved in the training of the new Iraqi armed forces have never seemed to know the percentages of Shiites and Sunnis among the rank and file. (They apparently had some idea among the officer corps, but even here American attention

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to this detail was not, it appears, particularly acute.)

But it was certainly a plan of former Iraqi prime minister Ayad Allawi, a Shiite and a former Baathist who has always been fairly comfortable in the company of Sunni Baathists, and his CIA backers. Allawi, and a good slice of the American government that still listens to and admires him, wants to seduce/bribe former Sunni Baathist officers back into the military as a means of gutting the insurgency. There is probably now, however, no single factor that will drive the Sunnis more to compromise than the growing presence of armed Shiites in their midst. Undoubtedly, this is a high-wire act. Shiite militias rolled very quickly into the new Iraqi army, and the new security services have engaged occasionally in brutal retaliation against Sunni Arabs who are not actively engaged in the insurgency. If the new Shiite army develops a reputation and thirst for revenge killings, then the political center on the Shiite side—the key to any new democratic Iraq—let alone on the Sunni side, will collapse and we will have civil war.

We are going to test, slowly and painfully, General John Abizaid's contention that it is better to have a lighter American footprint in this conflict and a heavier Iraqi one, even if it's predominantly Shiite. General Abizaid probably would have preferred to have a stronger Sunni component in the new Iraqi army, but that was never going to happen once the democratic process began in earnest. To see real progress in Iraq, the Sunni Arabs have to know in their hearts that they are going to lose in this insurgency, that, *mutatis mutandis*, what happened to the rebellious Shia in 1920 is what eventually will happen to them. They must know that the Arab Shia are not going to let them Lebanonize Iraq—that is, distribute power on the basis of creed and ethnic identity, rather than on democratic principles.

Sunni Arab states will likely work strenuously to encourage America to back the Lebanese approach. The Bush administration would be wise to resist this appeal since it would actually fuel the insurgency and alienate the Shia. Such a sectarian policy would likely kill off democracy in Iraq—one of the reasons Sunni Arab regimes like the idea—since the diminution of the democratic ethic on the national level would likely reverberate through each of the major communities. The beginnings of this can already be seen amongst the Kurds, the most clannish of Iraq's peoples: The two principal Kurdish parties—Masoud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic party and Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan—like Kurdish bloc voting since it discourages the growth of Kurdish competitors. We want to see Kurdish groups reaching out to Sunni and Shiite Arab political alliances—this may already be happening in a small way with the independent, religiously oriented Kurdistan Islamic Union—to batter the KDP's and PUK's long-standing monopoly of power.

Slowly but surely, the Shia are sending stronger signals to the Sunnis that they are not going to allow the Sunnis to win anything through terror and guerrilla warfare. This is not an easy thing for the Shia to do, as they do not have the reflexes of a proud, dominant community. A decent bet is that a majority of Shia today still believe that the Arab Sunnis could beat them in a military confrontation. The old division of labor between dominant Sunni and submissive Shiite is not easily overcome by either party. Rest assured that as long as the Shia see themselves as more on the receiving end of power and violence, the Sunnis, too, will see them that way, and the insurgency will remain undiminished. The building of the new Iraqi army under American guidance is now the psychological key to destroying old reflexes and instilling new ones that have a chance of working in a democratic Iraq.

Many American officials have been slow to realize what should have been obvious when Abrams tanks crossed the Kuwaiti-Iraqi border: The United States is engaged in a revolution in Mesopotamia. Too many Americans believed the well-meaning and highly Westernized Iraqi exiles—particularly the Sunni exiles—who spoke about the triviality of the Sunni-Shiite divide. Americans who thought Iraq was fertile ground for a new liberal secular order particularly downplayed the extreme indigestion, recalcitrance, and rejection that was inevitable, at least initially, on the Sunni Arab side. There is reason to hope now that the Bush administration better understands the dynamic among the Sunnis—if for no other reason than that America's lot is cast with the new Iraqi army, which will be, as it should be, overwhelmingly Shiite. Military facts on the ground should keep the bad instincts of the State Department and the CIA—the Sunni Stockholm Syndrome—in check.

Iran may try hard to mess things up, but it can probably only do so if the Arab Sunnis scare the Iraqi Shia into Tehran's arms. This still could happen. There is no love lost between the Shia of Iraq and Iran (the antipathy between the two can arise at any time in conversations). But the former will retreat into the protection of the latter if they believe the Sunni Arabs have again got the upper hand and intend to kill them. As long as Grand Ayatollah Sistani lives and is free to speak his mind, the political center in Iraq will survive (which is why the rumors of Iranian agents' buying property around Sistani's house in the holy city of Najaf are serious cause for concern). Iraq's Shiites are potentially a highly fractious lot with considerable internecine animosity. (It would be hard to overstate the distaste that exists, for example, between the clerically prominent and influential al-Sadr and al-Hakim families.) Grand Ayatollah Sistani and fear of the hard-core Sunni Arabs are perhaps the only things that most Shiites can agree on. In such an environment, Iran's ruling clergy can

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

certainly find fertile ground. Tehran's influence in Iraq appears to be growing, and probably will continue to increase until Iraq's Shiite parties actually become national Shiite parties with deeper Iraqi roots, which is why neither the followers of the radical cleric Moktada al-Sadr nor the Dawa party is probably the best stalking horse for the Iranians. Both groups, however radical many of their members, are well rooted in Iraqi society.

The Iraqi nationalist-Shiite marriage is authentic, if at times wild. (Followers of the Dawa and Sadr have both taunted Sistani about his Persian birth and blood; the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq never does.) SCIRI may be where the Iranians have their best bet since the organization is in a real predicament: It owes its birth to Iranian patronage, and it is financially dependent upon Tehran. This dependency is most worrisome in the south, where the Iranians appear to be investing heavily, and where the countervailing influence of Iraq's traditional clergy is relatively weak. Yet the Supreme Council is unlikely to gain and hold the allegiance of most of Iraq's Shiites unless it distances itself from Tehran. The Sunni jihadists and insurgents have thus done SCIRI a favor and a disservice by making Iranian support seem like a legitimate refuge for a Shiite community under siege from Sunni Arabs who've lost their minds. Nevertheless, we should not fear the Iranians in Iraq. And the Bush administration would be wise not to listen too attentively to the Sunni Arabs, Ayad Allawi, and the secularized, very liberal Iraqi Shiites who constantly see clandestine Iranian hordes coming over the border. The Iraqi Shia are not fifth columnists for the Persians. Nationalism among the Iraqi (and Iranian) Shia is a very solid thing. The Iraqis are actually more sincerely faithful and observant than their Iranian revolutionary cousins. The two sides both literally and spiritually speak different languages.

Success, nonetheless, will come slowly in Iraq. We will learn how slowly by watching the actions and words (especially the Friday sermons) of the Sunni clergy. They are probably going to play an enormous political role among the Arab Sunnis. Long deprived by Saddam and the Baath, the clergy are back. When they start to compromise, we'll know we've won. (And the odds of their compromising are much better in an Iraq deeply influenced by religiously faithful and sensitive Shiites than in one where liberal Shiites and Sunni secularists dominate.) We will also know we're winning when we see a significant increase in Sunni-on-Sunni violence. (It will be fascinating to watch the Middle East's Sunni Arab satellite television networks, which have depicted the Sunni insurgents usually as the good guys, handle this issue.) We can excoriate the Bush administration—especially the American military and civilian occupation forces—until we're breathless for all the missteps made in Iraq, but the fact remains the administration has handled the country sufficiently well to keep the democratic experiment moving forward. Given the fatal errors we could have made—given how enormously difficult the enterprise is—this is an achievement not to be belittled.

IRAN: Iraq may actually be a bright spot in the Bush administration's foreign policy, compared with Iran. With Iraq, a hard-nosed, historically sensitive person can have considerable, well-founded hope. With clerical Iran—still the greater nightmare for the United States—it's difficult to sustain any optimism. A knowledgeable observer would have to conclude that the clerical regime—which, properly understood, is a somewhat more conservative, cautious variation on the Sunni holy warriorism that struck us on 9/11—is going to get the Bomb despite the Bush administration's limited efforts to stop it. And again, contrary to the accepted wisdom in Washington, restraint in responding to clerical Iran's quest for nuclear weapons is much more likely to cause problems in Iraq than a muscular approach to countering Tehran's ambitions.

In Iranian eyes, the American-backed European Union's nuclear negotiations with the mullahs are not serious enough to be frightening. The EU-3—the British, the Germans, and the French—have in their own words gone as far as they can go in their soft-power negotiations with Iran's ruling clergy. The resurgence of Iran's hottest revolutionary sentiments under President Ahmadinejad and the recall of prominent "moderate" Iranian ambassadors from Europe is unlikely to change Europe's philosophy and tactics for dealing with the Iranian nuclear problem. The EU-3—at least for certain the French and the Germans—want Washington to introduce massive incentives—the dictionary definition of this is "appeasement"—to continue the West's "dialogue" with the mullahs.

The administration's response, understandably, has so far been silence. But continuous quiet reflection is not a policy, even when the CIA's analysts self-defensively throw up their hands and announce that they have no idea when Tehran is going to get nuclear weapons. (Unless Langley gets lucky with an Iranian "walk-in" who volunteers detailed, critical information about Tehran's weapons program, the CIA will probably only know the mullahs have the Bomb after they detonate it.) It is easy to appreciate the administration's predicament with the Islamic Republic: Counterproliferation does not lend itself to soft power. But the State Department, with Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns in the lead, now controls Iran policy. The decision by the administration to embrace the EU-3 negotiations was an interesting experiment in post-Iraq war transatlantic relations: We would let the Europeans de facto

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

own our Iran policy. By giving them this responsibility, so the appealing theory goes, we would encourage their maturity and their greater willingness to implement severe sanctions against the Islamic Republic if it didn't relent in developing its nuclear energy/weapons program. (To the EU-3's credit, it's very hard to find a participant in this affair who actually believes the Iranians *aren't* trying to develop nuclear weapons.)

The theory hasn't worked, of course. And it's pretty hard to blame the Europeans since they've been forthright from the beginning: They have never said they would be willing to impose tough sanctions on Iran for its nuclear misbehavior. The Europeans are also quick to point out, quite correctly, that the Americans have never really discussed sanctions either, since both sides know any biting sanction would touch Iran's oil industry. Sanctioning the Islamic Republic with the price of oil at $60 a barrel would require a certain fortitude, which neither side has (the Europeans, again, are at least honest in saying this). Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is obviously fearful of taking Iran to the United Nations Security Council since we will surely lose a vote there. Russia and China will not cooperate. The Germans might not, either. The idea of creating another sanctions regime confined to the G-7 industrial nations—an idea now circulating in Washington—is also a pipe dream since the Europeans have already made it crystal clear that they won't even embargo automobile parts to the Islamic Republic, let alone anything that might bring greater and more immediate pain.

The Bush administration has quite understandably allowed this game to go on. The policy alternatives are onerous: preventively bomb the nuclear-related facilities and implement an aggressive containment and pro-democracy strategy, or implement the difficult containment/democracy strategy without bombing the nuclear facilities. It is impossible to overstate the U.S. government's—particularly the CIA's—unpreparedness to start finding, encouraging, and materially backing the internal Iranian opposition to the ruling clergy. No doubt the Bush administration would like to punt the problem back into European hands. The Europeans don't want it, however, unless the United States gives them more goodies to dangle in front of the revolutionary clergy's eyes. (E.U. diplomacy naturally assumes that everyone is, or ought to be, avariciously pragmatic.)

Washington isn't going to do this, even if the clerical regime decides again, as it appears to be doing, to suggest some flexibility in its negotiating positions. (Opening up the Parchin military facility to inspections would be an example of a not particularly meaningful "softening" in the regime's position.) Some in the administration, especially in the Near East Bureau of the State Department, may want to try more incentives. The Iran policy paper recently leaked to the *Wall Street Journal* certainly shows a desire, strongest in the Department of State, to appease Iran further since the alternatives are convulsive. But the culture, politics, and history of the clerical regime in Tehran make this a difficult sell.

Just imagine an American diplomat actually promising security guarantees to an Iranian counterpart: "We hereby promise to leave Afghanistan and Iraq—installing in each a government to your liking—and to quit Central Asia. And we double promise never ever to talk about democracy in Iran again, and no more personal insults to the Spiritual Leader Ali Khamenei, which we know you find very offensive." Then imagine the same scenario with generous financial goodies attached up front, as the clerics would certainly demand. It is difficult to conceive of even a President John Kerry or a President Hillary Clinton handing over billions of dollars to clerics and Revolutionary Guardsmen, like the current Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who have a long record of supporting anti-American terrorism, not to mention other nefarious causes. In a pre-9/11 world, when so-called moderate Iranian clerics were our interlocutors, this didn't seem culturally, intellectually, politically, or strategically plausible. Now, it just seems surreal.

Ahmadinejad, who is an unvarnished revolutionary, makes even the Europeans blanch (they still won't support sanctions, but they do blanch). The Iranian president's recently expressed desire to wipe Israel off the map was a vivid reminder that Iran's ruling elite are still, on the important issues, faithful children of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Ahmadinejad is, of course, fundamentally no different from former President Mohammad Khatami, who loathed Israel as only a very left-wing cleric can, or Iran's leader, Ali Khamenei, who often gives the impression that he's memorized every single line of the Persian edition of the anti-Semitic *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, or Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who is in the West probably the most misunderstood cleric in the Islamic Republic. For the Europeans, and some in the Bush administration, Rafsanjani was the white-turbaned hope, the realpolitician-pragmatist who would save the West from a showdown over Iran's nuclear-weapons program. In reality, he is the true father of Iran's nuclear-bomb program, an overlord for the Iranian terrorism that struck Europe in the 1980s and '90s, and quite possibly one of the dark princes behind the domestic assassination campaign of Iranian liberals that began in the late 1990s. Concerning Israel, Rafsanjani has never given any indication that he differs with the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, a group Rafsanjani has always supported: Israelis are best when dead.

Which brings us back to where we were two years ago:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Are we willing to use military force to back up a nuclear counterproliferation regime against a state with a long record in terrorism, whose ruling elite is probably the most anti-American on earth? If we are not, then nuclear counterproliferation is effectively over. Iran's ruling clergy has enormous tenacity and a sixth sense for weakness (that's how they downed the shah). Unfortunately, the EU-3 negotiations have left us looking increasingly weak. This could change if the EU-3 could at least bluff the clerical regime into believing that they might consider draconian sanctions—but this seems very unlikely. The only real bright spot on the horizon is Grand Ayatollah Sistani and the possibility of a Shiite-led democracy just across the border. Ahmadinejad's election appears to have shaken Tehran's establishment. The new president, unlike the old, appears to be an unreconstructed socialist, who might actually make Iran's *dirigiste* economy even worse. This is no mean achievement with oil prices sky-high—we should, of course, wish him well.

The only way Iran is going to get better is for it to get a lot worse—and Ahmadinejad may just possibly be the man to galvanize a broad-based opposition to the regime. Right now, he and Sistani are the only hopes we've got for convulsions and evolution inside Iran's clerical class. If the Bush administration were wise, it would start to speak about religious freedom in Iran and the ruling clergy's oppression of the more traditional clerics of the holy cities of Qom and Mashhad. If the Bush administration were serious, it would batter the CIA until it began the slow and difficult process of trying to make contact with the anti-Khamenei forces among Iran's mullahs. In all probability, irreversible evolution or regime crackup will be driven by clerical dissent, not by Iranian liberals, progressives, or others with whom counterrevolutionary American-Iranian expatriates are comfortable.

Tyranny and Democratization: Progress here looks encouraging compared with the Bush administration's efforts on Iran. However, the central animating idea of President Bush's foreign policy—the democratization of the Greater Middle East—isn't going well outside Iraq. President Bush should get enormous credit for eliminating a debilitating anomaly in U.S. foreign policy whereby Washington exempted the Muslim Middle East from any pro-democracy rhetoric and censure. But the administration is having considerable philosophical and practical difficulty in moving beyond the president's inspiring speeches.

It's probably fair to say that the dictators and kings of the Middle East, whose dysfunctional autocratic rule has done so much to foster ever more virulent forms of Sunni Islamic extremism, feel American pressure less acutely today than they did 12 months ago. This trend can be reversed. American efforts to nudge and pressure Ilham Aliyev, the leader in the Republic of Azerbaijan, to open up the country's politics have been commendable if not always consistent. (The U.S. embassy's efforts to get Aliyev to accept inked fingers as a means to stop voting fraud is a significant achievement; the Bush administration's outreach to Senator John McCain, who is going to visit Azerbaijan during its upcoming elections, was also the right thing to do at just the right time.) On the ground in Baku, Azeri dissidents are quick to compliment America's helping hand. At this writing, Aliyev's ruling party looks primed to cheat in the November 6 parliamentary elections, but the Bush administration is at least trying to do a better job in the Caucasus than in Egypt, where it did virtually nothing to support democratic dissidents and censure President Hosni Mubarak for stealing the recent presidential election. (American ambassador Frank Ricciardone's praise of Mubarak after he got 88 percent of the vote was shameful.)

We are moving in the direction of what might be called an Atatürkist approach to democratization: With American nudging, dictators will see the light and advance their societies to a more liberal order. There are, however, two enormous problems with this approach: No one currently ruling in the Middle East, with the possible exception of Aliyev, remotely resembles Atatürk, who recognized quite openly European civilization as the ideal (and Atatürk didn't exclude fascism from that ideal). And Arab history since World War II strongly inclines one to believe that dictatorships in the Arab Middle East don't tend to ameliorate over time. In most cases, they've gotten worse.

The Bush administration has not yet had the great internal debate over whether *really* to push Arab dictatorships, especially Egypt's, to democratize, knowing that Islamic activists are likely to do well in any free election. Secularism, long wedded to ever-worsening dictatorships, has developed a very dirty name in much of the Middle East. Talk in the administration about "generational" change is an intellectual dodge: There is no such thing as a 25-year plan to bring democracy to Egypt. (Egypt's ruling elite would, however, welcome such a thing as eminently sensible.) Until the Bush administration holds this debate—and there are certainly signs it is beginning—and decides whether its policy will embrace some sustained fiscal, strategic, and rhetorical coercion, then America's democratization program in the Arab world will remain stalled.

The Bush administration needs to focus: Through rhetoric and aid, Washington can certainly push more aggressively Egypt and Jordan, two Arab countries that have probably the best chance of quickly making the transition to democracy. The administration should want to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pressure Jordan's Hashemite monarch King Abdullah to move in this direction since it's probable that the Palestinian problem will never be solved until the West Bank of the Jordan river is reunited with the East. Since the majority of Jordan's population is Palestinian and is much less infected with the Palestine Liberation Organization's marriage of terrorism and nationalism, a democratic Jordan would give nonviolent Palestinians on the West Bank, if not in Gaza, better odds of politically triumphing over the anti-Israeli hard core. Non-Palestinian Jordanians know the division between the two Palestinian peoples isn't sufficient to sustain two Palestinian states. Jordan's King Hussein, who held on as long as he could to his titular and religious authority over East Jerusalem, knew this, too. The Bush administration's frustrating efforts to fine-tune Fatah, the dominant group within the Palestine Liberation Organization, are unlikely to lead to anything except the continuing implosion of West Bank Palestinian politics. Fatah is a hopelessly corrupt mafia-like organization that can make its militant Islamic opposition look appealing, even to Muslims who do not believe in permanent holy war with Israel.

President Bush deserves considerable praise for his consistent unwillingness to pressure Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon to make more concessions in the face of continuing terrorism. The concessionary, Clintonian impulse is alive and well in the State Department, particularly within the Near East bureau, but it's quite clear the president will not surrender to it. The only workable policy with the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation is patience, and the hope the Palestinian polity will eventually expunge terrorism from its national identity. This is going to be brutally difficult, given the damage done by Yasser Arafat and the Islamic martyrdom psychology now deeply embedded among so many young Palestinian men. Historically, in both medieval and modern times, this passion dies a violent death; it does not pass away through negotiations conducted by old men like Abu Mazen. And it does appear to be weakening—increasingly suicide bombers seem to be young men and women who are in some fashion coerced into death. The administration should keep demanding political opening, fairness, and accountability within the Palestinian authority. It should not forget, however, that without democracy in Jordan, the odds of lasting Palestinian progress on the West Bank are slim.

Elsewhere we should not divert too much of our energy from Egypt and Jordan to Saudi Arabia and Syria. We should keep the pressure on Damascus, but we should not fool ourselves about how vicious the ruling Alawite clan will be in its attempt to retain power. We should, however, make up for lost time and improve our understanding of those inside Syria who oppose the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Supporting dissidents inside Syria will be difficult and dangerous, but we should earnestly start this process now, knowing it will take time for us to develop a plausibly workable anti-Assad program and for a viable Syrian opposition to form.

The same is true in Saudi Arabia, the Arab country that did the most to nurture 9/11. Simply put, the Saudis have too much money. All we can use against them is pro-democratic rhetoric aimed specifically at the royal family, and a more vigorous campaign to make them check their virulently anti-American Wahhabi missionary activity. At a minimum, we should force the CIA to become much more competent in tracking Wahhabi funding enterprises, both those sanctioned by Riyadh and those not. Down the road, we can then start to aid Muslims who want to fight the Wahhabi missionary money machine. This isn't a lot, but it would be a beginning.

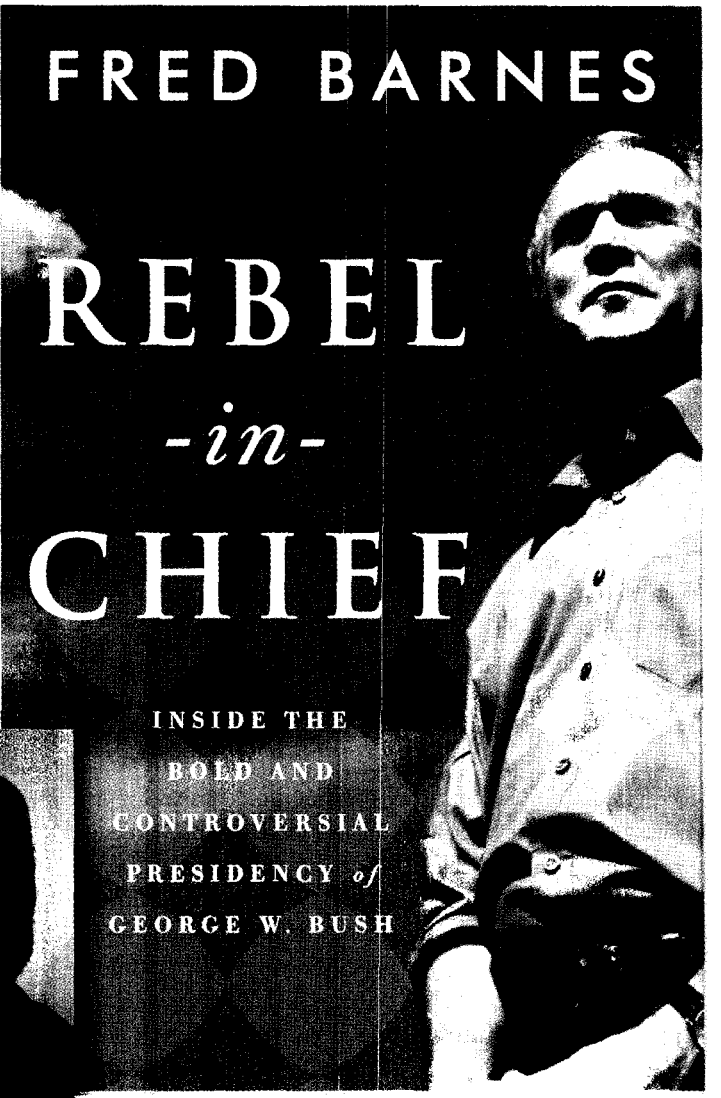
Remember the Cold War, where we threw money and manpower at left-wingers of many stripes, including those who were not particularly fond of capitalist America. The objective now is not to find and encourage pro-American Muslims; the aim is to find Muslims who are appalled by the tradition-crushing, culture-obliterating, holy-war-generating modern Wahhabi creed. In this internal Muslim struggle, hating America may well be a good starting point for anti-Wahhabi propaganda. This may be a difficult thing for the public-diplomacy folks under Karen Hughes to digest, let alone use, but it ought not be an insurmountable problem for the CIA, which must carry much more of the weight in the battle of ideas. Odds are, many faithful Muslims, who will likely dislike the United States and would reject overt assistence from Washington, will be more than willing to accept clandestine anti-Wahhabi/Saudi aid from Uncle Sam.

Which brings us back to Iraq. Saddam Hussein's downfall has accelerated democratic discussion throughout the entire Middle East—even in Saudi Arabia. This would not have happened without George W. Bush. The positive possibilities that flow from it are enormous, even if President Bush is unlikely to get much credit from Middle Easterners or, perhaps, from many Americans. But cross our fingers: Success in Iraq may possibly, eventually, solve our Iranian nuclear problem. Clerically supported democracy—of the kind that may emerge under Iraq's new constitution, backed by the Shiite clerics in Najaf, and ultimately even Sunni Arab clerics too—is a lethal threat to Tehran. It's a good thing this is so, for without favorable developments in Iraq, it would appear Tehran's clerics have won. Of course, if John Kerry had been president, Iran's clerics certainly would have nothing to fear. In a *Machtpolitik* world, only President Bush still has the power to dissuade and encourage. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Enjoy seven days and nights cruising the Mexican Riviera with your favorite Weekly Standard writers . . .

. . . and get the inside scoop on the Bush presidency from Fred Barnes, author of Rebel-in-Chief, forthcoming in January.



- Special private Weekly Standard sessions and programs
- Dining with editors and writers
- Traveling with like-minded conservatives
- Private receptions
- All-inclusive pricing
- A fully escorted cruise

Fred Barnes

And join conversations with Bill Kristol, Fred Barnes, Philip Terzian, Stephen F. Hayes, Jonathan V. Last, and our special guest, contributing editor John Podhoretz.

The 2006 Weekly Standard Cruise Itinerary

Date	*Day*	*Ports of Call*
Feb. 25	Sat.	San Diego, CA
Feb. 26	Sun.	At Sea
Feb. 27	Mon.	Cabo San Lucas, Mexico
Feb. 28	Tue.	Mazatlan, Mexico
Mar. 1	Wed.	Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
Mar. 2	Thu.	At Sea
Mar. 3	Fri.	At Sea
Mar. 4	Sat.	San Diego, CA

the weekly Standard

Holland America

THE CRUISE AUTHORITY

For more information, call 1-800-266-4043 or visit www.TWScruise.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Getty Images

At the Kibbutz Degania Bet, near the Sea of Galilee, 1945

What Zionism Is Not

The many ways the Jewish state is misunderstood By Benjamin Balint

If Leo Strauss had not taught us to read esoterically, to discern the ways a text's hidden meaning may contradict its overt message, we could have learned the skill from Jacqueline Rose, whose impassioned new book seems to ask to be read on two very different levels.

On the surface, *The Question of Zion*—the title is a tribute to Edward Said's *The Question of Palestine* (1979)—is a scholarly attempt to trace Zionism's strange power to command "passionate and seemingly intractable allegiance" to two forces in the Jewish unconscious: messianism and the psychopathology of the Holocaust.

Rose, a professor of English at Queen Mary, University of London, has made several previous skirmishes from her work in psychoanalytic and literary theory into this contentious subject. In a debate in London last January, she argued for the proposition that "Zionism today is the real enemy of the Jews." And in a piece published three days after a Palestinian suicide bomber killed three people and wounded 32 last year in Tel Aviv's open-air market, Rose urged us to understand suicide bombers "without condescension," and referred to the

> unbearable intimacy shared in their final moments by the suicide bomber and her or his victims. Suicide bombing is an act of passionate identification—you take the enemy with you in a deadly embrace. As Israel becomes a fortress state and the Palestinians are shut into their enclaves, and there is less and less possibility of contact between the two sides, suicide bombing might be the closest they can get.

The Question of Zion
by Jacqueline Rose
Princeton, 202 pp., $19.95

But Rose's latest book—already praised in England as "courageous" (*London Review of Books*) and "brave" (*Observer*)—represents her first full-scale foray. It is driven by a question that presses on its author keenly: "How," she asks, "did one of the most persecuted peoples of the world come to embody some of the worst cruelties of the modern nation-state?"

Invoking the great scholar of Jewish mysticism, Gershom Scholem, Rose suggests that the answer begins in understanding Zionism as a new messianism, unaware of its own messianic zeal and unable to be self-critical. Just as powerful messianic undercurrents in the 17th century brought forth the false messiah and apostate Shabtai Zvi from Judaism's dark, mystical depths,

Benjamin Balint, a writer living in Jerusalem, is associate editor of Azure.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

she says that today, cloaked in nationalism, the same forces have made Israel into a false and dangerous god. Zvi was a "proto-Zionist" and Theodor Herzl a modern-day Zvi—and both, Rose suggests, were inspired and insane in equal measure.

It matters little that Israel was founded and is still led by staunchly secular Zionists, deaf to any resonances of Jewish messianism. "The language of secular Zionism," Rose writes, "bears the traces and scars of a messianic narrative that it barely seeks, or fails, to repress." According to Rose, to see that "messianism, as unconscious inspiration, is in the air and soil of Israel" is to begin to understand the "sacred, violent fury, militarism, religious fanaticism" at the heart of Israeli society.

But Rose also sees in that society an even unhealthier act of repression. The conventional wisdom is that Israeli policies were not irrational responses to the Holocaust, but rational responses both to existential threat and to the long refusal of its neighbors to accept the nation's legitimacy—responses, in other words, to the disconcerting sense that if the Holocaust made individual Jewish existence a crime, Israel's Arab neighbors made collective Jewish existence a crime.

Rose, however, considers this to be self-delusion. Israel, she says, is founded on "a colossal sublimation of historical pain . . . the problem of historical injustice became a narcissistic wound." If Israel affords an example of the ways in which messianism and the repression of its memory can lend to Israel's political life its ruthless tint, Rose argues that it also "gives us an exceptional, magnified vision of how a wound turns into the cut of a sword." Or, as she puts it elsewhere, Israel "gives us the unique opportunity to watch the militarization of suffering."

The wound she refers to is the Holocaust—the repression of which is Israel's other great act of denial. The sword is Israeli state violence, which exploits the Holocaust in order to justify itself, and in a perverse sense even replicates it. In its treatment of Palestinians, Rose concludes, "the Israeli army reenacts one of the buried, shameful fragments of the past it most fiercely dreads."

Having put Israel on the couch, what treatment, then, does Rose recommend to her violent patient? "Jewish nationalism must take out the ego," she writes. "[It] will come into being only if . . . it abolishes itself."

When it comes to substantiating these claims, however, so obviously does Rose undermine her own critique—so outlandish and patronizing is the hyperbole, so plain the poor grasp of messianism, so self-evident the mistakes and the lapses in logic—that *The Question of Zion*, published as it is by a reputable university press, can perhaps only be meant to be taken seriously on its deeper level as an ingenious refutation of itself. If so, it succeeds brilliantly.

In developing her notion of Zionism as unconscious messianism, for instance, Rose herself gives evidence that many of the early Zionist thinkers thought quite consciously otherwise. She cites the early Zionist leader Max Nordau: "The new Zionism which has been called political differs from the old, religious, messianic variety in that it disavows all mysticism, no longer identifies with messianism." It could be argued, of course, that Nordau was in denial. But to determine who should be taken at face value and who shouldn't, Rose appeals to the authority of Gershom Scholem, only to quote him as writing "I absolutely deny that Zionism is a messianic movement."

It is as if Rose leaves us clues that she wants us to think through for ourselves the complex relationship between Zionism and messianism, and to discover the reverse of her overt claims. She wants us to understand, perhaps, that although Zionism is intimately connected with messianic hopes, it broke with messianism precisely by moving it onto the historical plane. In this sense, Zionism is the very antithesis of all the divergent attitudes of Jewish messianism put together, since it refuses the demand to wait for divine redemption, calling for human, this-worldly, self-reliant action where messianism awaits divine, otherworldly acts.

If we did take Rose's hints, we might further appreciate that Zionism need not feel embarrassed by its association with messianism, understood as a longing for regained independence and the fulfillment of the prophets' yearning for justice and peace, as in Isaiah's wonderful vision: "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." We might understand, too, that, by Rose's definition, every political movement of the 20th century was messianic in its impulse.

Then there are the mistakes, each of which may be read as a tip to look beyond the veneer of scholarship, which Rose draws from a few secondary sources. "[Moses] Maimonides tried to abolish messianism as a historical force," Rose writes, even though it is well known that the medieval Jewish sage raised messianism to one of the 13 essential principles of faith. In fact, Maimonides tried to eliminate apocalypticism, a very different thing, which postulates not redemption but *catastrophic* redemption. This is typical of Rose's conflation of false and dangerous messianism with messianism as such, and of messianism with religion as such.

Rose's simplifications and overwrought hyperbole also pervade her discussion of the Holocaust, which rests on her claim that it "fully enters the [Israeli] national memory only after the 1967 Six Day War." This is only partially true. Rose neglects to mention the "rebirth-from-ashes" rhetoric of Israel's founders, the illegal immigration of refugees that spurred Jewish resistance in Palestine in the 1940s, the fierce debate over accepting German reparations in the early '50s, the Rudolf Kastner trial (1954–58) and the Adolf Eichmann trial (1960–62). Rose, instead, contradicts herself, observing that awareness of the barbarism taking place in Europe caused myths of Jewish heroism to be "revived and polished with new vigor in Palestine."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

So ridiculous, meanwhile, are Rose's comparisons of Zionism and Nazism that you can only read them as signs that the book intends not to be taken at face value, but rather to criticize the criticizers of Zionism from within by caricaturing their views. "According to one story," Rose writes, "it was the same Paris performance of Wagner . . . that inspired Herzl to write *Der Judenstaat* ['the Jewish State'], and Hitler *Mein Kampf*."

There are other clues to this book's possible esoteric intent. Rose claims that an important part of Zionism's psychopathology is its inability to criticize itself. And yet because she has little firsthand knowledge of the country, and even less of its language, she draws her critique from an impressive array of leftist Israeli critics, academics, peace activists, conscientious objectors, post-Zionists, and non-Zionists both past (Scholem, Martin Buber, Ernst Simon) and present (Ilan Pappe, Avi Shlaim, Uri Avnery, Amos Elon, David Grossman, Baruch Kimmerling), each of whom she quotes denouncing Zionism. She thereby implicitly—and, as it happens, accurately—gives the impression of an extremely lively tradition of Israeli self-criticism.

Aharon Megged, an Israeli novelist and veteran of the Labor movement, has said of the country's intelligentsia: "For two or three decades now, several hundred of our society's 'best' men of pen and spirit . . . have been working single-mindedly and without respite to preach and prove that our cause is not just," perpetrating thereby an "assault on Zionist legitimacy." In short, Rose subtly provokes us to wonder whether any other country hosts such eviscerating self-criticism.

This brings us to the question of timing. This seems a glaringly odd time to write a book dedicated to explaining what Rose calls Zionism's "compelling inner force," just when many in Israel are remarking, either in celebration or in lamentation, on the end of Zionism, on its irrelevance to youth, on its absence from schools, and on the psychological and theological blow dealt to religious Zionism, in particular, with this summer's evacuation from the Gaza Strip of 8,000 Jewish settlers.

Finally, this book is late in another respect: Many of its criticisms are simply derivative. Here, for instance, is the New York University historian Tony Judt, another child of British academe, in 2003: Israel "imported a characteristically late-nineteenth-century separatist project into a world that has moved on.... Israel, in short, is an anachronism." And here is Jacqueline Rose in 2005: Zionism "imported into the Middle East a Central European concept of nationhood in the throes of decline." And a bit further on: "Out of the ashes a strange anachronism, against all odds, was being born."

The cumulative effect of all this is to bring into high relief the difference between the two levels on which *The Question of Zion* seems to move. On the surface, in insisting that Israel is destroying itself, and in calling for the self-abolition of Jewish nationalism, Rose puts forth her own apocalyptic form of counter-messianism—one based on shame. She believes that the only cure for her malady of shame is the abolition of its object: Israel. Shame, indeed, is the theme that runs through Rose's collection of essays, *On Not Being Able to Sleep*, and it plays an important role in this book, too, which is in part motivated by the author's feeling "appalled at what the Israeli nation perpetrated in my name."

But the book's latent message, if indeed it has one, is more profound. "What would it be like," Rose asks, laying a last bread crumb on the path to esoteric intent, "to live in a world in which we did not have to be ashamed of shame?" Jacqueline Rose, unlike many Jewish critics of Zionism motivated by shame, seems to be saying that she is on some deep level ashamed of her shame. In showing us why, she deserves our gratitude. ♦

Mental Health

In the post-Freudian world, it's a matter of opinion. **BY ALGIS VALIUNAS**

Going Sane
Maps of Happiness
by Adam Phillips
Fourth Estate, 245 pp., $24.95

Psychoanalysis, the extraction of buried psychic matter and its liberating exposure to the light of rational awareness—usually the painstaking work of years—is no longer the mainstay of psychiatry. Doctors offer it more as a technique of self-exploration for the moderately dissatisfied, and rarely present it any longer as the promise of salvation for the profoundly afflicted.

Salvation now lies in the latest psychopharmacology, coupled with talk therapy less protracted and less doctrinaire than the Freudian excavation and its side tunnels. Psychiatry tends to go deeper into the brain these days than it does into the mind, although at its most effective it cares for both. And the most debilitating mental illnesses—depression, schizophrenia, manic-depression, schizoaffective disorder (basically, schizophrenia plus manic-depression)—respond to treatment as never before.

Still, the genius of Freud has left a deep impression on our culture, so it is instructive to see what his most admired heirs are making of the psychoanalytic tradition today. In *Going*

Algis Valiunas is a writer in Florida.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Art Resource

"Operating the Fool's Stone" by Pieter Breughel the Younger (1564-1637)

Sane: Maps of Happiness, the English psychoanalyst Adam Phillips, a prolific writer and general editor of the new Penguin translations of Freud, takes on the increasingly popular but still largely unexamined question of what mental health, as opposed to psychopathology, consists of. For Freud himself, mental health involved coming to terms with the civilizing constraints that marked the limits of a rather rueful happiness.

How far we still subscribe to the Freudian conception is a significant measure of our cultural sanity.

Phillips's book is, in large part, a fascinating exercise in the cultural etymology of *sanity*: With learning of an easy sweep, Phillips shows how the word's usage down the ages discloses society's understanding of itself. The original English meaning of the word, in the 17th century, was "health in body and mind." Samuel Johnson, in his monumental dictionary (1755), narrowed the definition to "soundness of mind."

That straitened definition, however, proved morally expansive. The 19th century ratified the Johnsonian view of soundness as connoting, in Phillips's words, "health and orthodoxy and harmony, and solid and well-established principles." Sanity acquired its current popular meaning as "the opposite of or antidote to madness," with madness embodying the oceanic perils threatening to swamp Victorian moral certainty.

Moral certainty proved a frail little craft, indeed, in the 20th century. Phillips sees psychiatry's break with traditional sanity in a group of renegade disciples of the analyst Melanie Klein. While conventional Kleinians were "averse to madness," which is an essential part of our nature and with which our lives are a ceaseless wrangle, the unorthodox Kleinians generally favored sanity but thought too much of it was a bad thing, confining and warping natural inclinations. The 1960s introduced blatant "anti psychiatry": The theoretician Michel Foucault and the practitioner R.D. Laing taught that "to be sane in a world like this was to be out of touch with reality," and they conspired at "the glamorization of madness—the promotion of madness as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

revelation, as political protest, as the higher sanity."

By the time Phillips was beginning his psychoanalytic training in the late 1970s, the anti psychiatric vogue had passed, but it did leave its mark. While Phillips is no anti psychiatrist, he does implicitly incorporate into his own description of sanity a moderate version of Laing's critique of normality as Freud understood it.

What the reader of such a book as Phillips's most wants to know is what sanity and happiness mean today. Anyone writing on this matter does so under the influence of the Third Force psychologist (neither Freudian nor behaviorist) A.H. Maslow (1908-1970), apostle of self-actualization, or becoming the best person one can be. No other idea of the past half-century has had so potent and widespread an effect on American culture. That effect has not exactly been for the best, as popularization operates like a sausage-grinder, and has mixed in with Maslow's intellectual choice cut the customary offal, gristle, and rodent hair. Maslow's exhortation to live nobly has thus been corrupted into the mewling prescription to accept yourself as you are, however nasty you may happen to be.

Phillips is certainly not so lofty in aspiration as Maslow, nor quite so flagrantly degenerate as Maslow's most baneful stepchildren. For Phillips, moral health appears to be an indispensable part of mental health. "Sanity means loving oneself in exactly the right way, or knowing exactly what it is about oneself that is worth loving." That is, proper self-love demands genuine self-knowledge, and reckoning one's moral worth is the basis of decent behavior toward others. Fundamental decency is, above all, a natural regard for others' inviolable singularity: "No sane kind person can accept a description of another person as in any sense true if that person themself [*sic*] does not accept it. The sane kind person believes that getting on with people (including oneself) is more important than knowing or understanding people." The sane person has a knack for drawing good people into his life precisely because he has no fixed notion of what goodness is.

To establish such an order of moral rank would constrict his searching and improvisatory nature; it might even get him killed for some insane reason. "The sane person would not think it worth dying for anybody's sentences [*sic*], including their [*sic*] own," he writes. Ethical prescription is a form of pontification and imperial self-aggrandizement; universal moral principles must be eradicated, and reverence for individual and cultural uniqueness inculcated: "No adult can know what's best for another adult; and, by the same token, no group or society can know what's best for another group or society."

In a sense, one cannot even really know what's best for oneself, unless it is to eliminate the need to know what's best; for one's strongest impulses and longings tend to conflict with each other, and one sprouts new impulses and longings all the time, so that the perpetual rediscovery of one's nature requires a sane person to make continual adjustments and accommodations. Indeed, to state that one is making a lifelong commitment to another person cannot be sane: "The only sane foregone conclusion about any relationship is that it is an experiment; and that exactly what it is an experiment in will never be clear to the participants. For the sane, so-called relationships could never be subject to contract."

What they are subject to is the endless search for novel pleasures—essential to sanity, within limits: "It would be part of the sane person's sanity to want new forms of pleasure in which neither one's kindness nor one's excitement are overly compromised." Sane sexuality, for example, includes the freedom "to pursue [one's] sexual inclinations not simply as long as they don't harm other people, but as long as they don't harm other people in ways that they don't want to be harmed." Sanity gladly comprises sado-masochism, provided one is kind about it.

In short, Phillips's ideal of sanity is a portrait of liberalism perfected *circa* 2005: Isaiah Berlin with nipple piercings. Where Phillips is moderate and sensible—at least as such qualities are understood today—his conclusions are of crushing banality; and where he is fashionable and preposterous, his conclusions are of crushing banality. His ideal, moreover, partakes of the liberal intellectual's usual incoherence. On the one hand, sanity requires true self-knowledge and moral judgment; on the other, you don't really need to know yourself, so long as you like yourself.

Yet self-knowledge is also somehow so important that it enjoys absolute moral authority even in those people who lack it entirely. The person who is blind to his own character, or lies to himself, nevertheless sees himself truly, as another person who might penetrate that self-deception and search him to the core does not. (This pretty well obliterates the traditional role of the analyst.) Like each individual, each group or society has its own way of knowing what's best for itself, so even if a particular society is founded on torture, rape, and mass murder—which manifestly offend against the right of a certain group in that society to decide what's best for *itself*—no other society can say that's wrong, or intervene to end the abominations. This is reasoning, or rather its travesty, plucked screaming from *The Guardian*'s editorial page.

By etymology, psychiatry is the care of the soul. Phillips is not the sort of doctor to whom one's soul can be entrusted, whether it is mortal or immortal. His prescription for sanity even suggests that the social foundation of psychoanalysis is crumbling irreparably; the concept of normality has been so debased that psychoanalysts like Phillips accept the platitudes, confusions, and inanities defining the current culture at its worst as the ideal that their patients should strive to attain. Sanity like his makes neurosis look like the wise alternative.

The sad wisdom of Freud is a relic of a time and place that Phillips is glad to see gone. The replacement Phillips devises is pitiable, laughable, and lunatic. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Learning to Write

The Republic of Letters has a home at the Sewanee Writers' Conference. **BY DAVID SKINNER**

Sewanee, Tennessee

Everyone at the Sewanee Writers' Conference was nice. I arrived late. No problem. Did I get something to eat? Well, grab a plate and sit down over here with us. Can I give you a lift to the reading, a tour of campus, access to workshops along with manuscripts so you can follow the discussion?

Of course, I'm a journalist who could end up saying mean things in print. But *everyone* at Sewanee was treated well. Southern manners? Perhaps, but most people there were not from the South—the morning paper at the conference is the *New York Times*—and the vast majority were, of course, writers.

Now, the writers I know, journalists mostly, are some of the biggest snobs on earth. They'll pretend to have not met you before and do it again a few days later. They'll feign ignorance of your writing when you reviewed their book last week. They'll deliver just-formed opinions with an air of finality that would make the pope blush.

That's not the kind of writer you meet at Sewanee.

Founded in 1989 by Wyatt Prunty, director of the program, the Sewanee Writers' Conference claims to be the second-most-competitive writers' conference in America. Funded in part by the Tennessee Williams estate, it offers workshops in literary fiction, poetry, and playwriting. The conference takes place about 90 minutes southeast of Nashville on the genteel hilltop campus of the University of the South. Even the climate is nice, drier and airier than you expect.

The faculty roll includes many notables: Diane Johnson is a regular, so are Ernest J. Gaines, Francine Prose, and Barry Hannah. Visiting commentators include many respected agents and editors. This year brought editor Gary Fisketjon of Knopf, Julia Glass, author of *Three Junes*, and her agent Gail Hochman. The industry representatives speak with surprising frankness about their jobs and the writing they bring to market. Their information is certainly more to the point than one finds in how-to-become-a-writer books.

Sewanee has a reputation for being a tad traditionalist. So I was not surprised to hear more than a little griping about what has become of literary theory and criticism.

"Theory in the academy today," says director Prunty, "doesn't help the intelligent, interested reader approach point-of-view work." David Lynn, editor of the *Kenyon Review* and a visiting panelist to the conference, tells me he's thinking about starting a readers' conference to address the public side of the problem. When an editors' panel opens the discussion to questions, a man in the back notes that the audience for imaginative literature has been in steady decline for decades and asks what the panelists are doing about it. (Not much, apparently.)

Yet another reminder that Sewanee is not where the *avant garde* summers is the curious issue of the politics of verse. I find myself having a few conversations over whether more fashionable poetry circles still dismiss rhyme and meter as being right-wing. (Less-than-universal consensus: No, that stopped being true a few years ago.) But there is nothing rightward about the conferee who barks at me over breakfast about how he'd like to see some editors from THE WEEKLY STANDARD getting shot in Iraq (but that could have happened anywhere) or the *Harper's* editor who says on a panel that his magazine has become more political in recent years. Then knowingly: "I hope the reasons for *that* are obvious."

But otherwise the conference is apolitical and, above all, congenial. People there were constantly getting together, dressed in conference T-shirts printed with fondly remembered pronouncements of a you-had-to-be-there quality. The typical day starts with communal breakfast, then readings, then panels, communal lunch, afternoon workshops, lectures, communal dinner, then more lectures. After all this, everyone gets together for drinks.

Conferring may not be essential to good writing, but it is the form modern literary society takes. One might wish for something more stylish than a plenary session on the changing role of agents in publishing today—something more like the Algonquin Roundtable, say—but writers' conferences are easier to find.

At dinner, the topic is Allen Tate. Wyatt Prunty tells of the two children Tate sired while in his 70s to a younger wife, a former nun who had left the convent for him. Prunty, a tall glad-faced southerner and a poet himself, finishes the Tate anecdote by saying this goes to show "the power of the poetic imagination." After dinner, over drinks, the poet and literary critic John Hollander raves about the "sympathy" evident in Hemingway's "Homage to Switzerland," which he then links backwards and forwards through several Spanish writers before digressing awhile on the postwar Italian cinema. Later on, Hollander and another poet, Rosanna Warren, who is much raved about here and also happens to be the daughter of Robert Penn Warren, guide me home as they are on their way out anyway, and Hollander and I talk about a common acquaintance, the historian Gertrude Himmelfarb.

This is one pleasure the student writer gets out of the conference, being allowed to feel and chat like a writer, a precious thing given how hard it is to be recognized as one or make a living

David Skinner is an assistant managing editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as one. Of course, there's no explaining America's completely unjust determination not to offer a living to anyone and everyone who thinks he has a story to tell.

At breakfast, I chat with Lisa Blackwell from Tallahassee. Thirty-four years old and married, she is by education a linguist. She has published little but written a lot, one story versus seven novels, though one of the novels is "with an agent." Before getting married, she was able to squeeze more writing into the day, often going at it from 8 P.M. till 2 in the morning at a table in the local Waffle House, where "you don't invite a lot of eye contact." Since getting married—she and her husband eloped, she tells me, by going to a notary public at lunchtime because, well, they were in love and, hmm, it's complicated—she is spending more time cooking. Writing has been relegated to spare moments like the time available during her lunch break.

Miriam Berkley

The Sewanee Roundtable

"I walk up to the bagel shop, work for half an hour, and walk back to work." She knows she needs to be writing more. "I've been rehearsing the conversation I'm going to have with my husband when I get home."

Newbie writers face one-in-four odds of being accepted by the conference, and pay $1,100 for the privilege, while the more accomplished pay only a few hundred dollars or nothing. All participants are assigned to a workshop headed by two writers, one a senior faculty member with possibly a major award under his belt, the other a junior faculty member, more of an up-and-comer. Building relationships between the National Book Award types and their younger successors, one visiting editor tells me, is actually "the most valuable thing here."

What about the young hopefuls? I ask. "I can't tell you what they really get out of it."

For a hint, I visit some workshops. The first one is run by John Casey, who won the National Book Award for *Spartina*, and Randall Kenan, the author of two well-regarded novels. The students address the teachers as they discuss the 20-page student manuscripts they've read for today's class. One or two student criticisms verge on brutal, but most are tentative, starting, "Maybe the problem is" or, "I don't *feel* like. . . . " Says one student about the first manuscript: "I feel like this story is too much about what it is about." Minutes later, another student says the same manuscript is too mysterious.

Especially vacuous comments are left to wither on the vine, while the more probing become fodder for discussion, led by the teachers who also stand in like attorneys for the accused. The student writer doesn't clarify or defend his text. Although one hears about instructors doling out tough love, everyone seems on good behavior (at least in my presence). Letting sharp student criticism pass uncontested is about as close as any instructor comes to being cruel. Since the manuscripts being "workshopped," to borrow the unwriterly term in use, are by definition still in progress, the teachers may do no more than air thoughts of a categorical nature about what kind of story this one is, or could be, and make reading suggestions for stories and novels that deal with some of the relevant obstacles.

Reading suggestions seem like a good idea. In conversation with me, several participants confess to fairly paltry reading habits. Several tell me they have not read any books by their teachers.

Success, however, they respect. While students vary on the usefulness of workshops, they are almost unanimous on the major reason they are here: for their one-hour, one-on-one session with a "name" writer like Richard Bausch or Alice McDermott.

Tom Bligh, a doctoral candidate from Florida State whose amusing manuscript concerned the family madness brought on by a megalomaniacal toymaker-father, earnestly gave his teacher, John Casey, very high marks after their session. Casey knew the manuscript, had much to say, and ended up talking with him far longer than he was contractually obliged to.

When I ask a trio of twentysomething MFAs why they've come, espe-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cially after spending the last two years in workshops just like these, one mentions the "4 Cs," which I'm told are characters, contacts, cocktails, and consortion. When I ask what consortion is a euphemism for, the question answers itself in a round of boozey giggles. Fittingly, this conversation also features cocktails, as it takes place during a round of beer pong, a campus sport in which two-player teams, facing each other across a ping-pong table, attempt to land ping-pong balls in open cups of beer.

As for characters, the first example would be Annie McFadyen, the blonde MFA from Florida State who tells me about the 4 Cs. Tall, gorgeous, and not the least ashamed of it, she's the most talked-about person at the conference. In one anecdote I hear, McFadyen, who's from Reston, is wearing a well-fitting "Virginia is for Lovers" T-shirt. A guy at the conference takes note. She gives him a big wink and says, "I'm from Virginia."

Annie's little posse is about the closest thing to a cool crowd at the conference. She and the two guys she runs with are called "the kids," "the Breakfast Club," and much else. When I mention that I'm writing about the conference, Annie throws herself forward and with a mischievous smile perfectly calibrated to defeat male reticence, says, "Can I be in your story?"

More than a little fun and games takes place. Before admiring the champions of beer pong, I had my wallet lightened a few dollars in a game of poker—a Sewanee tradition started by the late Donald Justice, poet, Pulitzer Prize winner, and Sewanee faculty member. On the nights that Justice was so inclined, word would go around the dining room that "Donald wants to play." Given to groaning over inattentive players who'd not realize it was their turn, the esteemed poet was nicknamed "Speedy Justice."

If there was much consortion going on, however, I didn't notice. The older and marginally more well-known Bread Loaf Writers' conference in Vermont was long notorious for its hyperactive consorting, which Rebecca Mead described in a 2001 *New Yorker* profile as one of three compulsions conferees felt but satisfied with only various rates of success: "getting published, getting drunk, and getting laid." A much smaller conference, Sewanee also draws an older crowd (very few attendees are under 30) and, reportedly, faculty lotharios are not invited back.

Getting drunk is another matter. When we talk about the nightly cocktail hours at the French House, which operates as a kind of officers' club for the more upward-bound writers, one regular quotes to me a line from *The Sound and the Fury*. "At Harvard they teach you how to go for a swim at night without knowing how to swim and at Sewanee they don't even teach you what water is." Indeed, it is a very late hour when you can't get a drink.

Miriam Berkley

Alice McDermott

The second workshop I attend seems more, well, feminine, perhaps because the manuscripts were written by women and could only have been written by women. But the whole atmosphere is, to continue with the girly cliches, warmer and more nourishing. The teachers—Mark Winegardner, author of *The Godfather Returns*, and Alice McDermott, best known for the Irish-American classic *Charming Billy*—offer more prescriptive advice, much of it sound. But given the way students pea-shoot each other's work in the low-stakes game of peer criticism, you wonder how much of the advice is observed except to take aim at workshop manuscripts.

It's the nature of the workshop beast to treat manuscripts far more roughly than a reader would while leafing through the pages at Borders. But the teachers are clearly aware of this, if unable to do much about it. In an essay that appears in the useful *Sewanee Writers on Writing*, McDermott herself lovingly examines a rule-breaking, advice-ignoring story that would, if subjected, be torn apart by workshop nitpicking. The author? Vladimir Nabokov.

Eric Sumner tells me he always wanted to be a writer, but only started in earnest three years ago at age 46. If a little late to the game, he makes up for it by having what seems like a solid idea: to write about living and working in corporate America. While family and religion have become less prominent in American culture over the last few decades, jobs have increasingly become the center of many people's lives.

This theme, as Laurie Miller noted in the *New York Times* last year, cries out for exploration. It also has the competitive advantage of not being an idea that would occur to many other writers because so few have any

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

experience in corporate America.

Sumner does. Before this he had an impressive career in telecommunications. Formerly a CEO at Dynamicsoft, which was bought by Cisco last year, he was also a chief technology officer at the ill-fated Lucent. We debate the question of whether any great novels came out of the tech boom (my own candidate: Po Bronson's *The First Twenty Million Is Always the Hardest*) and talk about his novel, a drama pitting a man versus a woman for the top job at a technology corporation.

In comparing life in telecom and his career so far as a writer, Sumner says he hopes the latter will be as successful as the former. "Phone calls are almost free now," because of companies like the ones he worked for, he notes. Though it's not clear what a parallel achievement would be in literary fiction, Sumner wants Sewanee to help him get there.

Later that evening I meet Tim Woodward, a sharply dressed gastroenterologist from Jacksonville. In 1986 he was a resident at the University of Virginia, where he fell in with John Casey, whose writing seminars he'd visit when he wasn't on call. Educated by Jesuits in San Francisco, Woodward, who is married with three children, seems determined not to do anyone's bidding but his own. Though African American, he's far more likely to reference older French or German novelists than, say, Toni Morrison. A *New Criterion* reader, he's a fan of Theodore Dalrymple, another physician-writer, and seems more absorbed by ideas in general than by the self-consuming idea of how to become a famous writer. He's published a number of short stories—his byline is Solon Timothy Woodward—one of which received honorable mention from the Pushcart prize, but he's come to Sewanee for guidance on how to take the next step.

For guys like Sumner and Woodward, who have been pretty much alone, blowing on the flame of their writing without much assistance, Sewanee offers community, a sense of identity, and friendship. While many of the students might be better off locked in a motel room with their manuscripts for two weeks, writers like these seem well-served by the experience. Any number of accomplished authors are going to be attracted to a place like Sewanee, where they're treated like royalty by adoring and envious students; but the greater feat is drawing talent in need of nourishment that can't be self-supplied.

In a recent essay in *Harper's* (from the issue in which editor Lewis Lapham flies into an indecipherable rage over George W. Bush. Oh, right, that's every issue), Lynn Freed, a professor of creative writing, goes in for an episode of serious professional self-loathing. Her piece calls creative writing students overambitious ignoramuses, the job of teaching them unbearable and pointless, and the whole collegiate enterprise of creative writing instruction a sham.

She would certainly know better than I, a mere passerby, except that I find this writers' conference to be quite innocent by comparison, a gentle community of professionals, several of whom are doing good work, finding a way to spend more time together and, possibly, help out some younger writers. It's not a bad or a shallow enterprise; it just may not be sufficient to reverse America's downward slide in the reading and writing of imaginative literature.

Still, conferring with fellow writers can be fun. After a long talk with Woodward, trading book recommendations and reader's notes, I am a little tipsy and, since I've been at this for hours, famished. A tall poet from New Orleans offers to drive us back to our rooms. Then, just before the first drop-off, he makes an inspired suggestion: "Who's up for Waffle House?"

I can't think of a better reason to go to a writers' conference. Some yearnings can be satisfied only by longwinded talk and greasy food. ♦

Washington's Audubons

A tantalizing glimpse at the National Gallery.

BY CLAUDIA ANDERSON

Who knew that the National Gallery of Art possessed one of only two complete, never-bound, original sets of John James Audubon's *Birds of America*? The other such set reportedly is in Moscow.

A selection of the National Gallery's hand-colored etchings—some fifty marvelous works printed between 1826 and 1838—is being shown with a modicum of fanfare in the West Building's ground-floor Central Gallery through March. The last time the National hung its Audubons was in 1984, when, again, a small fraction of the set of 435 prints went up on the walls; and the last exhibition before that was in 1969. Hundreds of prints remain in drawers in the gallery's storerooms, shown only by appointment.

This is what it means to be a wealthy museum. The Audubons, explains the show's curator, Carlotta Owens, are just 435 of the gallery's trove of 90,000 works on paper. "Audubon's Dream Realized" is one of six exhibitions that opened at the National in a two-week period this fall. The birds compete with the prints of Félix Buhot, the still lifes of the Haarlem master Pieter Claesz, 15th-century woodcuts, Italian illuminated manuscripts, monumental sculpture from Renaissance Florence, and a continuing exhibition of paintings, drawings, and prints from the National's extensive holdings of Winslow Homer.

Claudia Anderson is a managing editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Audubon's passenger pigeon: Once the most common American bird, it is now extinct.

The other reason for rationing the public's exposure to the Audubons, of course, is the pictures' preservation. Watercolors fade with exposure to light, which means they must be shown sparingly, and under carefully controlled illumination. To behold the indescribably vibrant pink of Audubon's flamingo—to see his almost boringly familiar wild turkey cock spring to life in the National's etching, with its glowing ambers and saffrons and tobaccos and even a touch of gold leaf—is to feel a rush of gratitude to the caretakers who have protected these pictures so well.

Yet even so, it is hard to fathom: The vast majority of the pictures hidden in drawers for decades?

It may be that a further reason the gallery shows no particular urgency about placing these works on view is that they are so often reproduced. There is a *Birds of America* to suit every pocketbook. And even the early etchings are not so exceedingly rare. Perhaps as many as 120 of the original enormous "double elephant" sets are said to survive, many of them in private hands or abroad, but many accessible to people who know where to inquire. The Library of Congress has one. True, the National's set is in especially good condition. But Audubon enthusiasts are not strictly constrained to come to Washington to track down the early prints.

The obvious contrast is with the one-of-a-kind paintings from which the etchings were made. These are the pictures Audubon painted over a period of nearly twenty years using his distinctive, self-taught blend of watercolor, graphite, pastel, oil, chalk, gouache, ink, and occasionally collage. Determined to see his birds published—and insistent that each be represented life-size, even the huge herons and pelicans and raptors—Audubon carried his paintings to England, and sought out a printer of highest quality who was willing to take on the unusual task. He closely supervised the printing and coloring of the etchings, which were delivered to wealthy subscribers in batches of five over a period of more than ten years.

Audubon saw this work to completion before he died in 1851, and in 1863, his widow, Lucy, sold 435 original paintings—430 of them for *The Birds of America*—to the New-York Historical Society, which houses them still. The paintings have traveled only once: Some 95 of them were exhibited in nine American cities (including Washington, where the National Gallery hosted them) in 1993, on what was billed as their final tour. To see these originals today, you really do have to go to New York.

Fortunately, the New-York Historical Society, long negligent of its Audubons, is now resourceful about putting them on view, even while respecting the conservators' rule that no picture be exposed to light for more than six weeks in ten years. In the Audubon Niche on the fourth floor of the NYHS building on Central Park West, two to four of the paintings are rotated every six weeks. And every spring, starting in 2004, the NYHS mounts a six-week multimedia exhibition showcasing forty paintings, different every year, along with a variety of objects relating to Audubon's adventurous life and to the place of his work in the history of ornithological art and science.

Would that the National Gallery of Art showed a little more such missionary zeal about sharing its *Birds of America*. Interest in the pictures can only grow as studies of Audubon's work and life continue to proliferate. Soon to be added to an already bulging bibliography: an anthology of writings by the naturalist himself, due out in April, edited by his most brilliant biographer, Richard Rhodes.

Reviewing the Rhodes biography in these pages a year ago, Robert Finch called *The Birds of America* "arguably the most influential work of art this country has ever produced." He might have added that it is also a remarkable record of unspoiled American nature—Audubon began roaming the American woods the year Jefferson commissioned Lewis and Clark to explore the West—and, as such, it is a precious part of our national patrimony.

What a fitting gesture it would be if our National Gallery of Art—even amidst its embarrassment of riches—found room to mount its own permanent, rotating Audubon Niche. More than most of those 90,000 works on paper, Americans need to see these. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

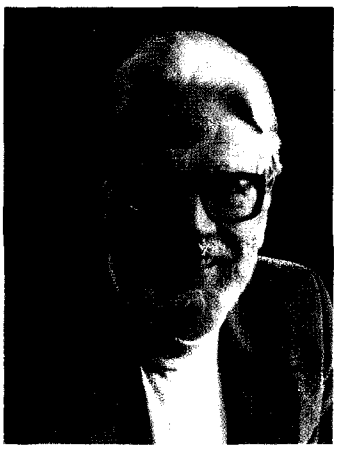
Wayne Booth 1921-2005

The man who knew how fiction works.

BY EDWIN M. YODER JR.

I have a theory, perhaps a bit patronizing, that few readers will recognize the name of Wayne Booth, who died recently, because . . . it doesn't sound literary. T.S. Eliot or Cleanth Brooks? Yes. Wayne Booth? No. More like a banker or realtor.

His death saddened me for reasons shortly to be described. But it isn't too late to make his acquaintance, if you haven't. He is, one might say, a book; and a book is he. His claim to fame is one of the foundational works of 20th-century literary criticism—as important, if you ask me, as Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent" or Brooks's *Well Wrought Urn*. It is called *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, and it was first published 44 years ago by the University of Chicago Press. My copy, the second edition of 1983, is well worn. When I was teaching fiction in the 1980s in the Georgetown Liberal Studies Program, and in the 1990s at Washington and Lee, I always pressed two preparatory books on my students. One is Eric Auerbach's *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*; the other is Booth's.



Wayne Booth

The idea underlying Booth's title is obvious: Rhetoric, as defined by critics from Aristotle forward, is essentially the art of verbal persuasion. Today, the word has been degraded—pejorated, as we were taught to say in Latin I—by slipshod use. When we call something or someone rhetorical today we mean no compliment; we mean wordy, sly, and often hollow. It wasn't so in classical understanding, and isn't so as Booth uses the term. *The Rhetoric of Fiction* is about those devices that make storytelling plausible, believable—"realistic," if you like, although "realism" is a question-begging idea (see below).

Booth considers the familiar shibboleths and mantras of storytelling. An example, endlessly reiterated when I was studying writing at Chapel Hill under my great teacher Phillips Russell half-a-century ago, is "show, don't tell." Dramatize, that is; let the characters *display* the story. Don't tell us that X is jittery as he approaches the house, drunk; show him reeling along, show us the nervous tic around his eye as he prepares to knock on the door because he has forgotten where he put his house key. Booth made it his business to dissect such shibboleths as "show, don't tell" in the light of writerly practice, good and bad. He shows us when the rules apply and when and where they have been successfully violated, usually by the masters.

You may be familiar with a conception in the analysis of fiction that Booth originated, certainly expounded and popularized: the "unreliable narrator." That is the voice or character in the story whose version of the facts can't be trusted. His unreliability may be subtle or blatant; it may arise from confusion, or the urge to deceive, or what Doctor Johnson called "stark insensibility." Every reader's favorite example is Ford Madox Ford's great novel *The Good Soldier* (1915), which abounds in reports that turn out to be false. You keep peeling away these misleading clues and reports until, at last, you reach the core truth.

Of course, the unreliable narrator is hardly a new feature of storytelling. Long before the rise of the novel you find him in plays and stories. The ghost of Hamlet's father, who one night just before dawn on the battlements at Elsinore claims to have been assassinated—poisoned—by his brother, Claudius. He groans about his sufferings in Purgatory and demands vengeance. But is his report reliable? Part of the tension is that Hamlet wonders if what he believes to be the ghost of his father is an "honest ghost," or merely a mischievous demon tempting him to commit murder.

Wayne Booth devoted a long career to the analysis of what makes fiction tick. He obviously thought stories were important and, right off the bat, in the first paragraph of his first chapter, he gives us one big—indeed, unique—reason that fiction retains its capacity to enthrall, to entertain, to instruct about life and people:

> In life we never know anyone but ourselves by thoroughly reliable internal signs and most of us achieve an all too partial view even of ourselves. It is in a way strange, then, that in literature from the very beginning we have been told motives directly and authoritatively without being forced to rely on those shaky inferences about other men which we cannot avoid in our own lives.

A typically meaty Boothism, whose implications are large. And his book abounds in them. I never met Wayne Booth, and know no one who did. But I am in his debt for a book that taught me much of what I know about the art of fiction—a work whose riches every serious reader of tales should know front to back. ♦

Edwin M. Yoder Jr. is a former editor and columnist in Washington.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

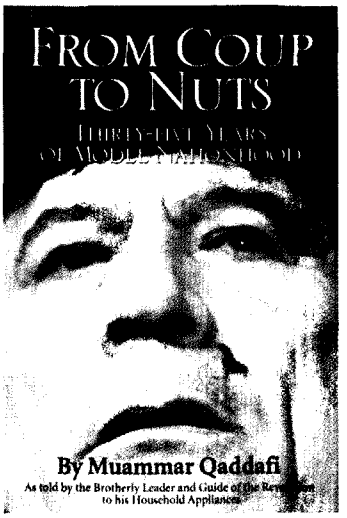
Parody

"The elder son of Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi . . . says he hopes his country's political and economic opening to the U.S. will soon lead to the normalization of relations. . . . 'I'm not saying we are a democratic state 100 percent,' he said in an interview. 'But we have made Libya a model for the Middle East.'" —Los Angeles Times

Amazon.com: From Coup to Nuts...

amazon.com® Your Store Books See all 32 product categories

Search Browse Subjects Bestsellers The New York Times® Best Sellers Magazines Corporate Accounts Amazon Shorts Bargain Books Use Bool



From Coup to Nuts: Thirty-five Years of Model Nationhood (Hardcover)

by Muammar Qaddafi

As told by the Brotherly Leader and Guide of the Revolution to his Household Appliances

List Price: $19.85

I Run Iran: Wiping Down the Map
by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

Rang Goon: How I Led Burma to Traitor-Free Paradise
by General Than Shwe

Mugabe'd by Reality: On Staying Put
by Robert Mugabe

My Little Nuke Coup: You Don't Know What I've Got
by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Introduction by Kim Jong-Il

From *Monocracy Weekly:*
It's impossible to imagine a Colonel more highly regarded than Libya's all-powerful ruler of nearly four decades, Muammar Qaddafi. Under his leadership, the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has gone from geopolitical obscurity to worldwide fame, becoming synonymous with fascinating covert actions around the globe. Beginning with the nomadic childhood in the desert region of Sirte, the book quickly progresses from his expulsion from the Sebha preparatory school in 1961 to his coup against King Idris in 1969. What comes across most in this autobiography is the Leader's passion for absolute rule as well as his remarkable directness and dislike of what he calls "the Zionists." *From Coup to Nuts* is an interesting read that any aspiring insurrectionary ought to consider. Recommended.

From Al Buqlist:
Whether you love him or hate him, you can't help but find Colonel Muammar Qaddafi's memoirs fascinating as he recounts his rise from slightly feared student activist to greatly feared supreme leader. Muammar Qaddafi delivers 35 brilliant years' worth of consistently astute (and often iconoclastic) leadership wisdom and knowledge from the man Libya's news agency calls "the Guide of the First of September Great Revolution of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya." *From Coup to Nuts* is the story of a young idealist whose commitment to explosives would gain him worldwide renown. It provides a compelling portrait of a man determined to face down the twin evils of flying machines and discotheques

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

going beyond

Could tomorrow's energy be closer to home?

Increasing Demand By 2020, the world's population will have added 1.5 billion new citizens. With more and more people looking to access the energy they need for heat, light and mobility, global energy demand is set to rise dramatically. As many as 700 million additional vehicles may be traveling the world's roads. And here in the U.S., within the next fifteen years demand for electric power could rise by as much as 50 percent. Without careful planning, increasing demand will mean rising prices and greater reliance on overseas energy suppliers. That's why at BP, we're investing in tomorrow's energy solutions, starting right here in North America.

Homegrown Resources Increasingly, the energy supplied by BP that powers American homes and businesses is coming from North America. Already over 60 percent of the oil BP uses to make fuels in the U.S. comes from this part of the world. We're also the largest producer and supplier of clean-burning natural gas in the U.S. Our operations in Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico and other states are making a significant contribution to meeting the growing energy demand in the U.S.

New Investments Today BP is already the biggest investor in new energy development in the U.S. One of our most far-reaching initiatives is a decade-long $15 billion investment in the Gulf of Mexico to find and produce new energy supplies. But we're not done yet. This year we will invest $1 billion to boost natural gas production in onshore areas of the lower 48 states and increase America's energy supply. And we're making investments in new energy infrastructure for the U.S., including $750 million to build better, cleaner, more efficient plants.

Education and Research At the same time, we're investing in our greatest source of energy solutions: people. BP is putting resources into education, particularly in the fields of science and energy innovation. We are a major sponsor of the U.S. Department of Energy's 2005 Solar Decathlon. Our A+ for Energy program has awarded $4 million in grants and scholarships to more than 3,000 California teachers, just in the last two years. And in Chicago, we not only help teachers incorporate solar energy into their curriculum, we also provide solar systems to help power some of the schools.

There are no easy solutions to the growing demand for energy. But sometimes the best solutions are the simplest. And what could be simpler than starting at home?

It's a start.

bp.com

bp

beyond petroleum®

© 2005 BP p.l.c.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I'm one in a million. Everyday nearly 1,000,000 Americans earn their living helping GM build and sell cars in the United States. I'm one of them. My name is Pete Hunt and I'm a team coordinator in general assembly at the Pontiac Solstice plant in Wilmington, Delaware. To me and my family, it's the most important job in America.

Pete Hunt

DRIVING AMERICA'S ECONOMY

Only GM

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED